

A SIDE CHARACTER'S LOVE STORY

1

Akane Tamura





EVEN AT
THE EDGES
OF THE ROAD,
WHERE THE
SUNLIGHT
DOESN'T
REACH...

CHAPTER 1



OH...



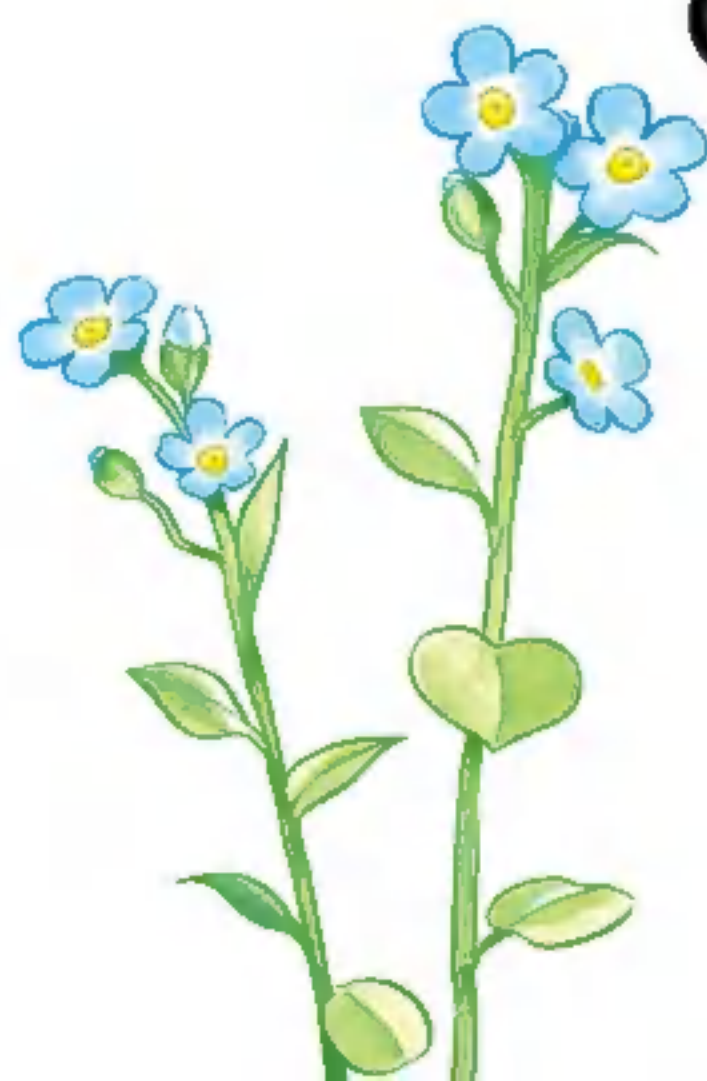
...THE
SEASONS
STILL CHANGE,
AND FLOWERS
STILL BLOOM.



CONTENTS

A Side Character's Love Story Vol. 1

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...I
STILL GET
NERVOUS
BEFORE
COMING IN
TO WORK.

GOTTA
TRY NOT TO
MAKE ANY
MISTAKES...

WONDER WHO
I'M WORKING
WITH TODAY...

I'M PLAIN,
MEEK, AND
DON'T HANDLE
ATTENTION
WELL.

SO I SAY,
BUT...

KA-
CHIK

CLOMP
カ
CLOMP
カ

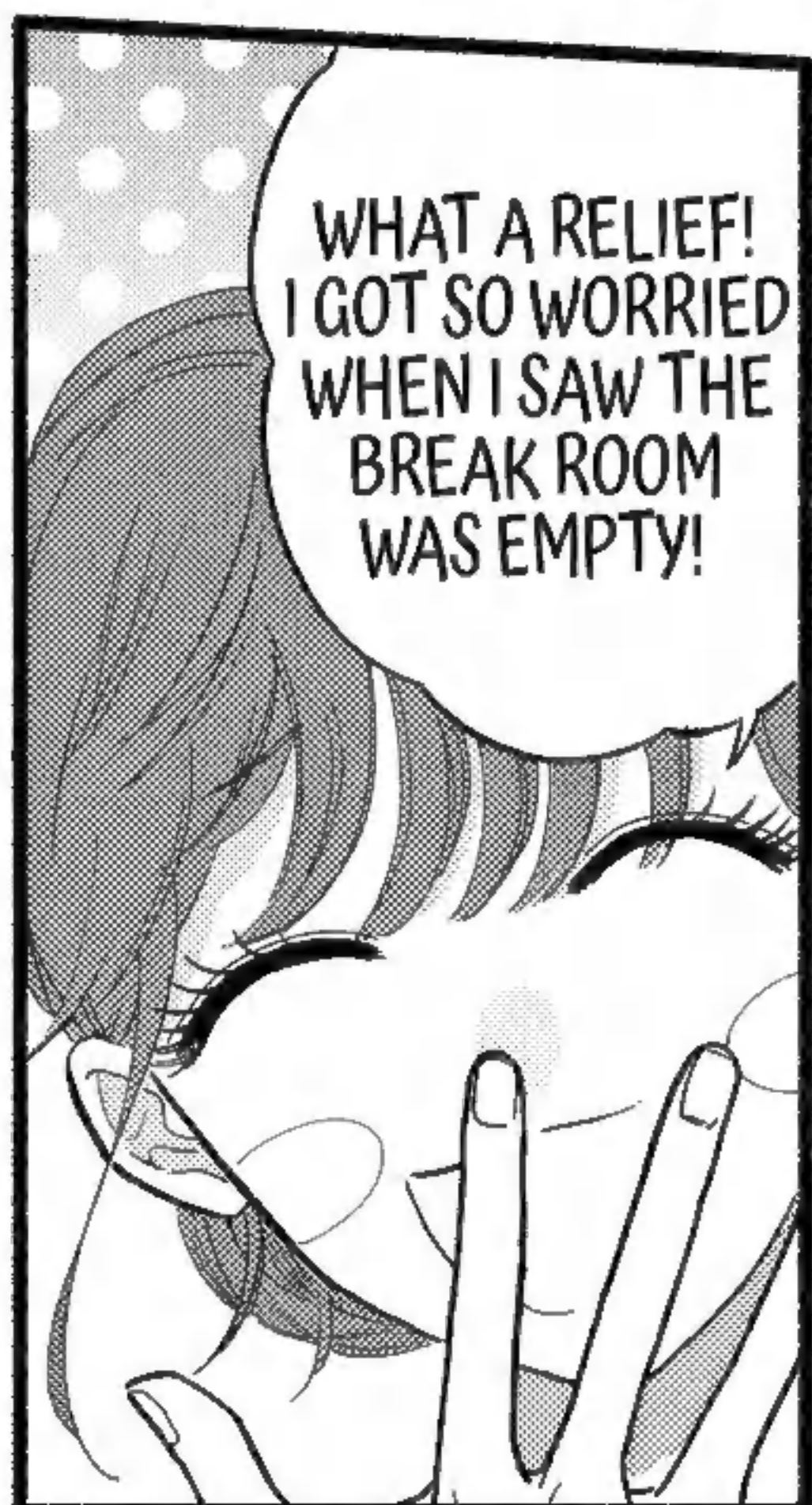
THAT'S
THE STORY
OF MY LIFE.

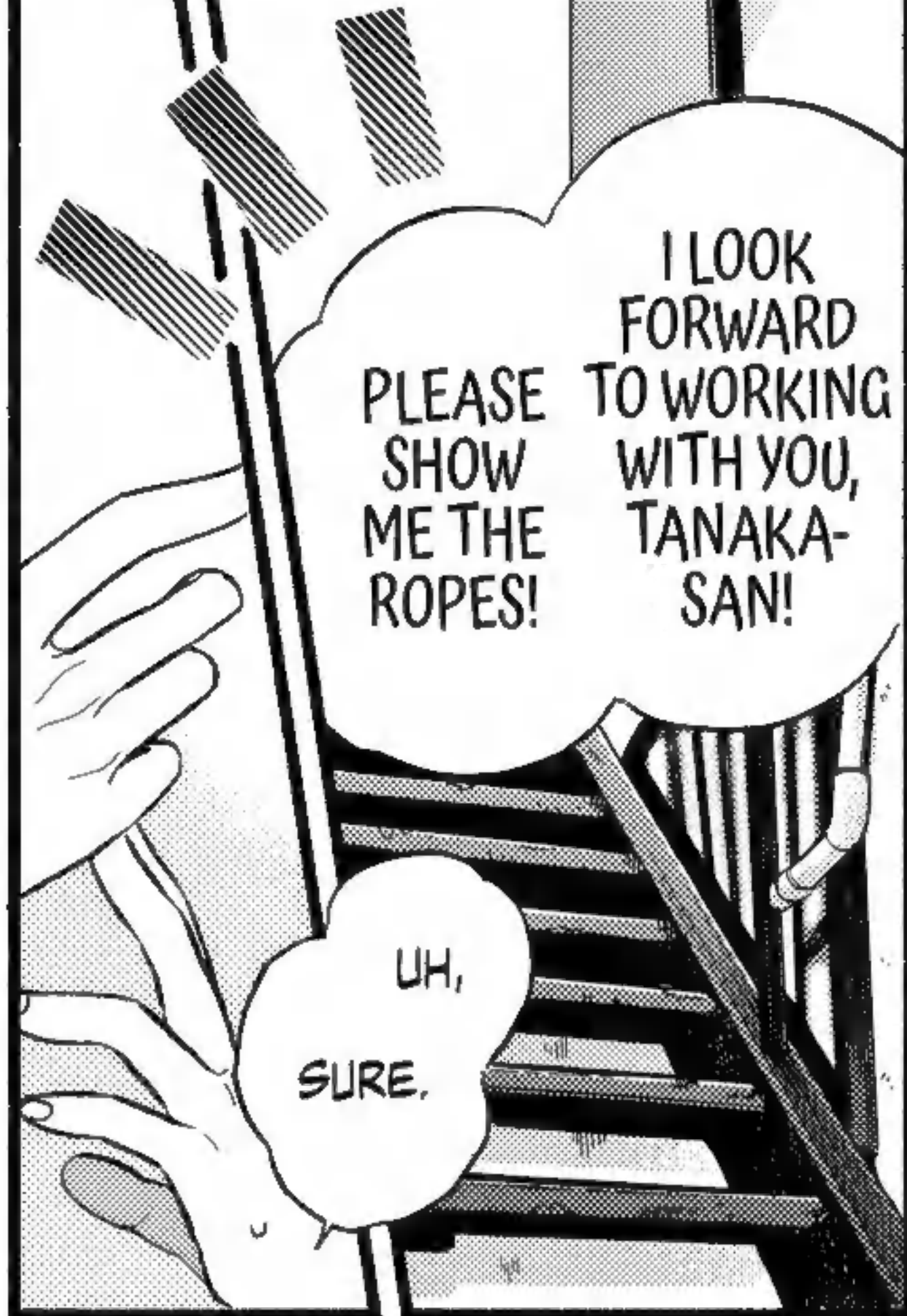
CLOMP
カ
CLOMP
カ

...WHILE
I'D BE THE
UNOBTRUSIVE
SUPPORTING
ROLE
STANDING
OFF TO
THE SIDE.

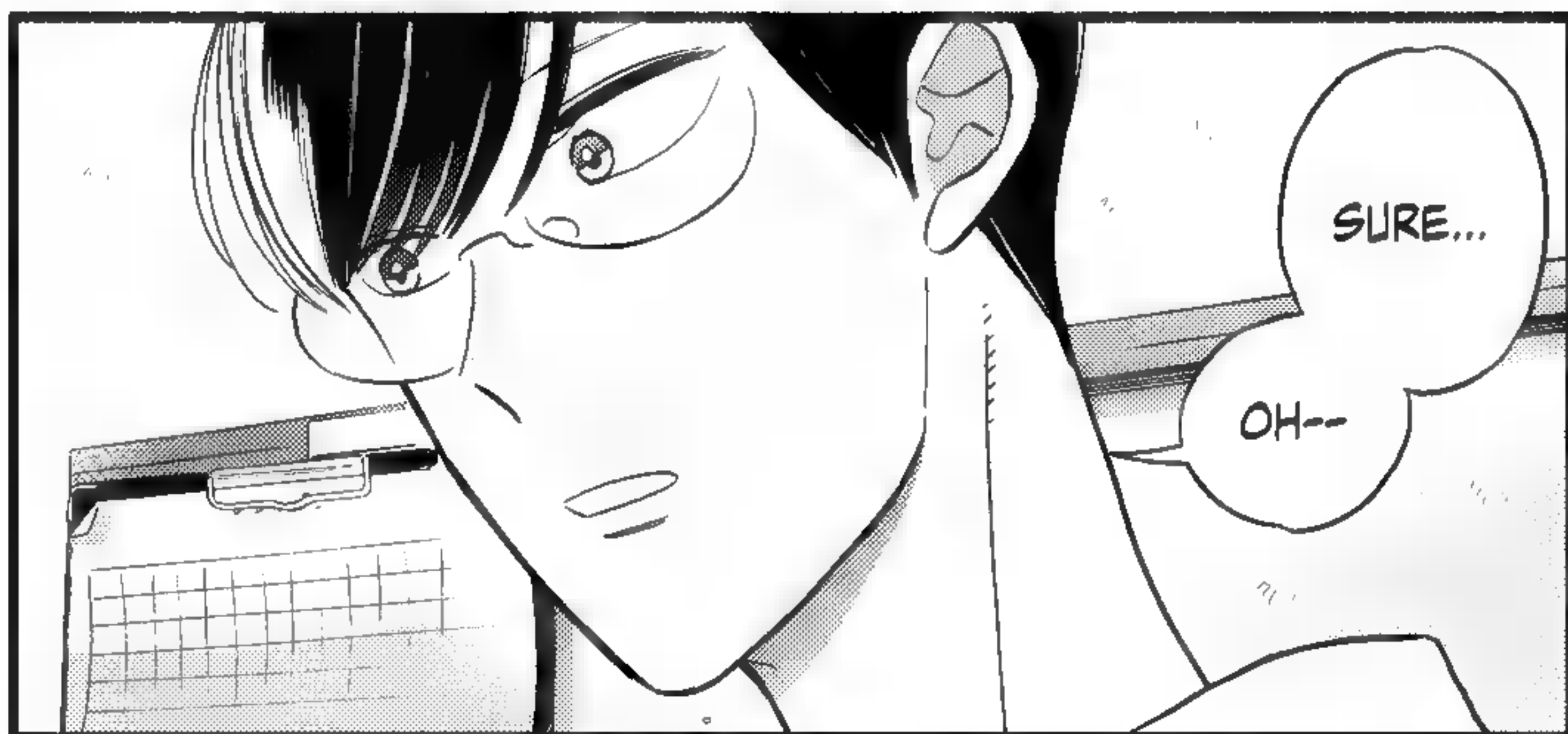
IF MY LIFE
WERE A PLAY,
SOMEONE
ELSE WOULD
BE CAST AS
THE LEAD...

















I'LL CARRY
IT OVER HERE
FOR YOU.

YOU'RE
QUITE MY,
STRONG,
AREN'T
YOU?

NO...

OH,
I SEE.



ONE DAY
AT THE
REGISTER...

THANK YOU
VERY MUCH.



IT'S RIGHT
BEHIND THE
STORE.

WOULD YOU
MIND CARRYING
IT OVER TO MY
HOUSE?



AND MY
HANDS
ARE ABOUT
TO GIVE
OUT...

TREMBLE
TO IL

TREMBLE
TO IL

I'LL
TAKE IT.



HUH?
WHAT
SHOULD
I DO?

IS IT
OKAY FOR
ME TO
LEAVE THE
REGIS-
TER?!

TREMBLE
TO IL

TREMBLE
TO IL



YOUR
HOUSE?





HE HELPED
ME OUT OF A
TIGHT SPOT...

I'M SURE
IRIE-KUN
DIDN'T GIVE
IT A SECOND
THOUGHT,
BUT...

...BY CARRYING
THAT HEAVY
ITEM FOR ME.

...I'VE NEVER
FORGOTTEN
WHAT HAPPENED
THAT DAY.



TANAKA-
SAAAAAN!

AND
THAT'S
WHY...





AM I BEING
A NUISANCE BY
TELLING HER ABOUT
EVERY LITTLE
THING?

CASP
It's?

FRET
1/7

SEEMS
LIKE SHE WAS
GETTING WORN
OUT AT THE
REGISTER,
ANYWAY...

BUT IF SHE
CAN'T FIND IT...
WELL, IT LOOKS
LIKE SHE'S
GOT IT?

FRET
1/7

MOBUKO'S QUIRKS:
SHE BECOMES
PARALYZED BY HER
OWN WORRIES.

OH,
IRIE-SAAAN!





...I'VE JUST
BEEN LIVING
INSIDE MY
OWN HEAD.

UP UNTIL
NOW...

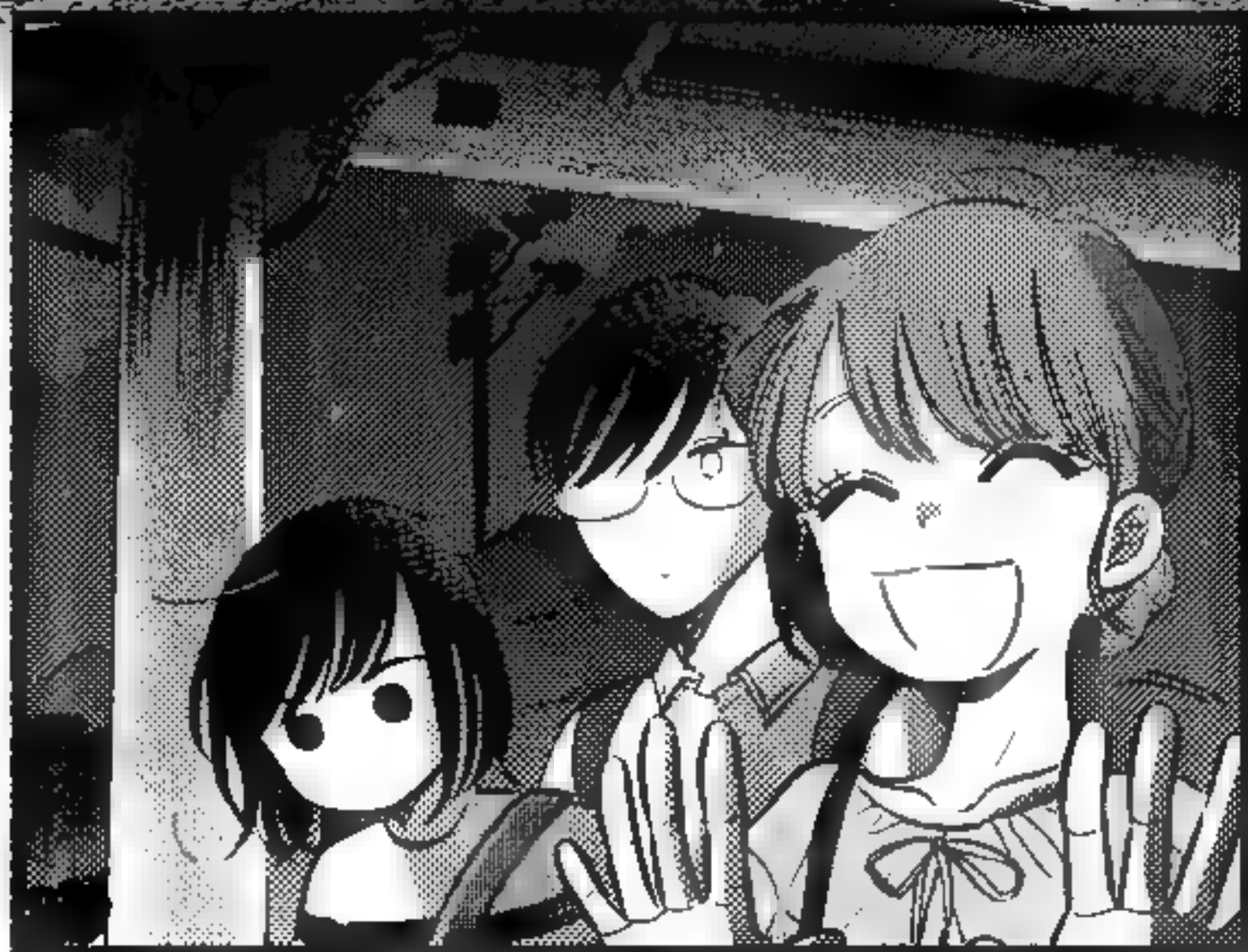
...A WHOLE
YEAR HAS
GONE BY,
AND I DON'T
EVEN HAVE
IRIE-KUN'S
CONTACT
INFO.

COME
TO THINK
OF IT...





HAVE A GOOD EVENING!



SEE YOU TOMORROW!



I'M STARVING!

I BETTER ASK MOM WHAT'S FOR DINNER.

OH--

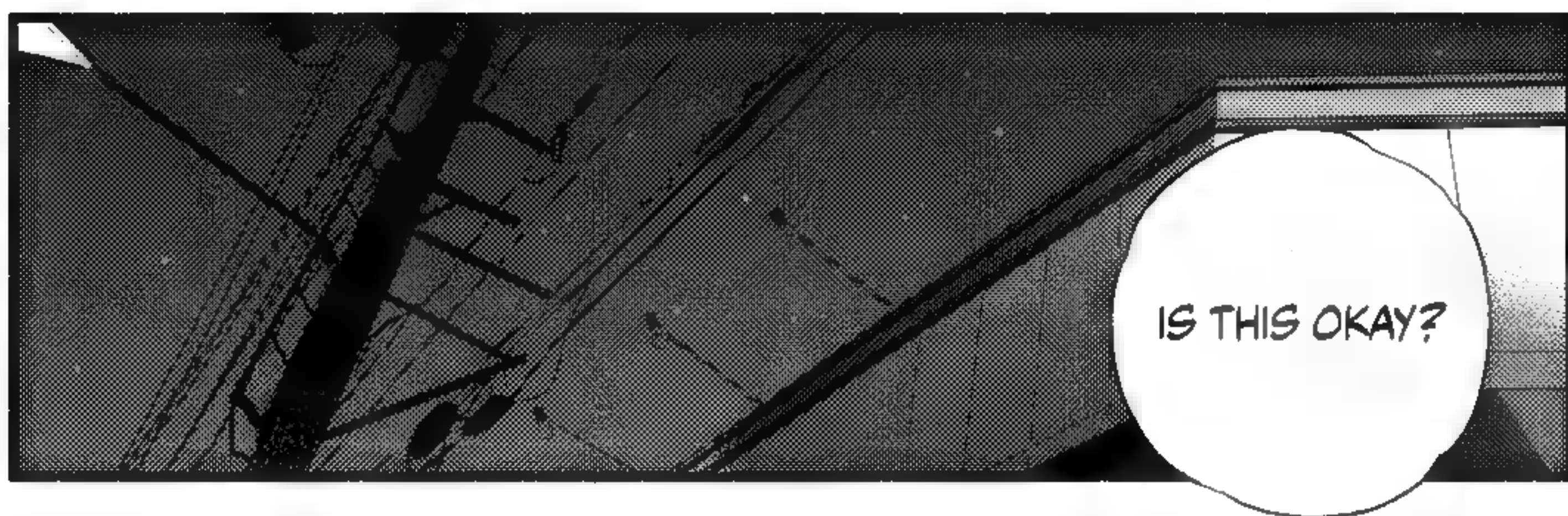


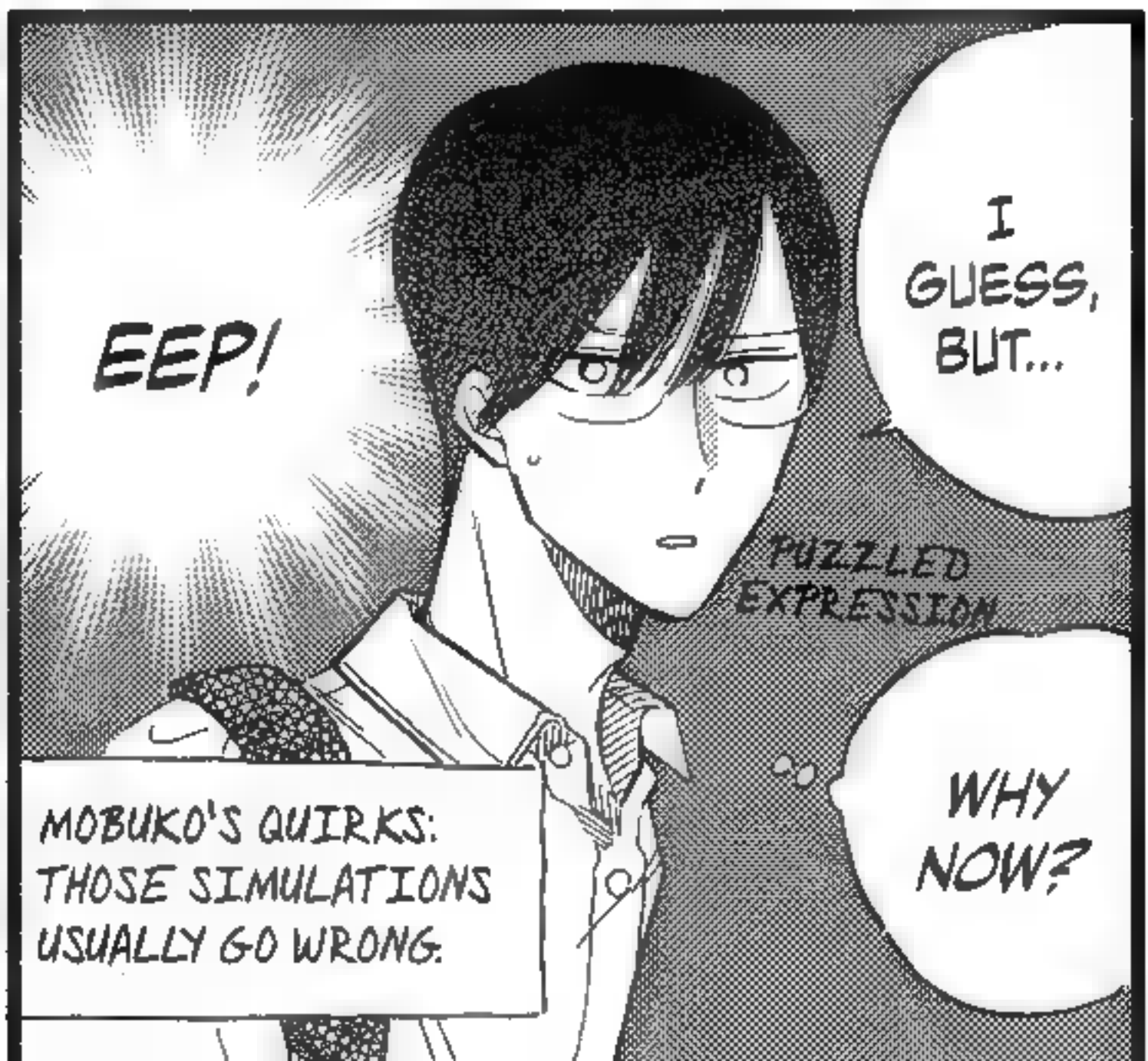
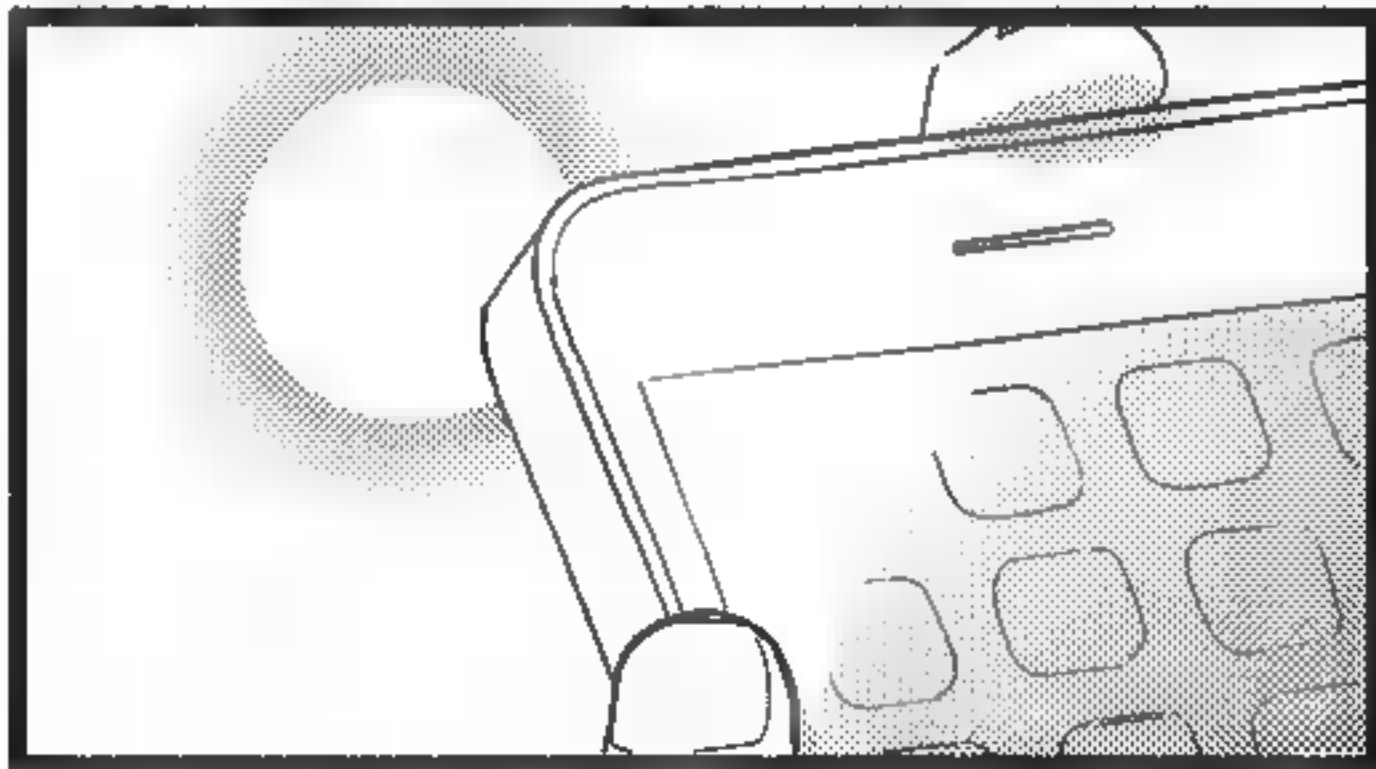
MY FEET ARE KILLING ME...

SLUMP

I'M SO BEAT...

NICE WORK TODAY.











WHAT
HORRIBLE
TIMING!



SEE YOU...



HUH?

SORRY
ABOUT THAT.

UM...



I'M SO
SOR--

UH

I WISH
I COULD
DISAPPEAR
RIGHT NOW.

GLOOM
ズ
ズ



THERE'S
NO NED TO
APOLOGIZE...

HE'S
ABSOLUTELY
RIGHT!



I'VE
NEVER
EATEN
DINNER
WITH A BOY
BEFORE...

B-BMP
K



B-BMP
K



B-BMP
K

I'M HAVING
DINNER WITH
IRIE-KUN...!



YES-
SIR!

I'LL
HAVE
A ME-
DIUM

OH MAN,
I'M SO
NERVOUS,
I'VE GOT NO
APPETITE...



UH...
I'LL HAVE A
SMALL PLAIN
UDON.

WHAT'LL
YOU
HAVE?!

K
K
K

I...
I HAVE
TO KEEP IT
TOGETHER...

NO.

UH...
YES.



MOBUKO'S QUIRKS:
SHE WON'T CORRECT
PEOPLE EVEN IF
THEY'RE MISTAKEN.

WHAT?!

RIGHT!
ONE MEDIUM,
PLAIN UDON!











OF COURSE.

I BLURTED
IT OUT...

HUH?

LET'S BOTH
KEEP UP THE
GOOD WORK.

YOU'RE RIGHT,
WE'VE BEEN
WORKING
TOGETHER
FOR A WHOLE
YEAR NOW.

I WONDER...



I'VE
NEVER...



IS IT A
GOOD
THING...

...THAT
I WAS A
LITTLE
BOLDER
THAN
USUAL
TODAY?

...BEEN
ABLE TO
PUT A NAME
TO THIS
FEELING.





*BUT
NOW...*



*...I THINK
MAYBE I CAN
CALL THIS
"LOVE".*

THINGS I WANT TO EAT WITH UDON





**A SIDE
CHARACTER'S
LOVE STORY**
Akane Tamura





I'M NOBUKO
TANAKA,
A 2ND YEAR
IN COLLEGE.

I HAVE A
PART-TIME JOB
WORKING THE
REGISTER AT A
SUPERMARKET.



BUT EVEN I...



I'M MEEK AND
UNOBTRUSIVE,

AND SPEND
MY DAYS LIKE A
SIDE CHARACTER
IN MY OWN LIFE.

CASHIER







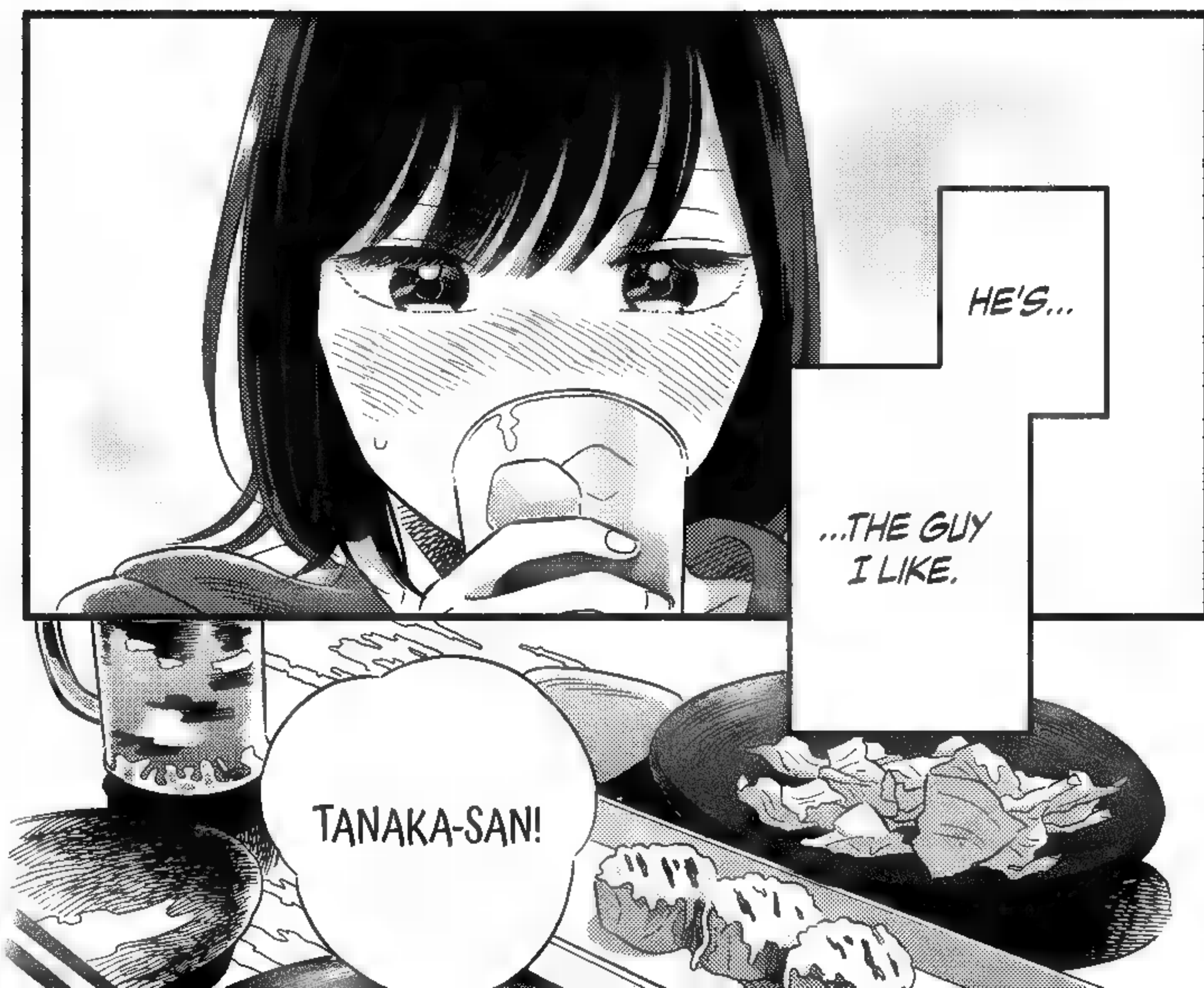
OH! OOLONG
TEA.



THIS IS
IRIE-KUN,
A 2ND YEAR
AT MY
COLLEGE.



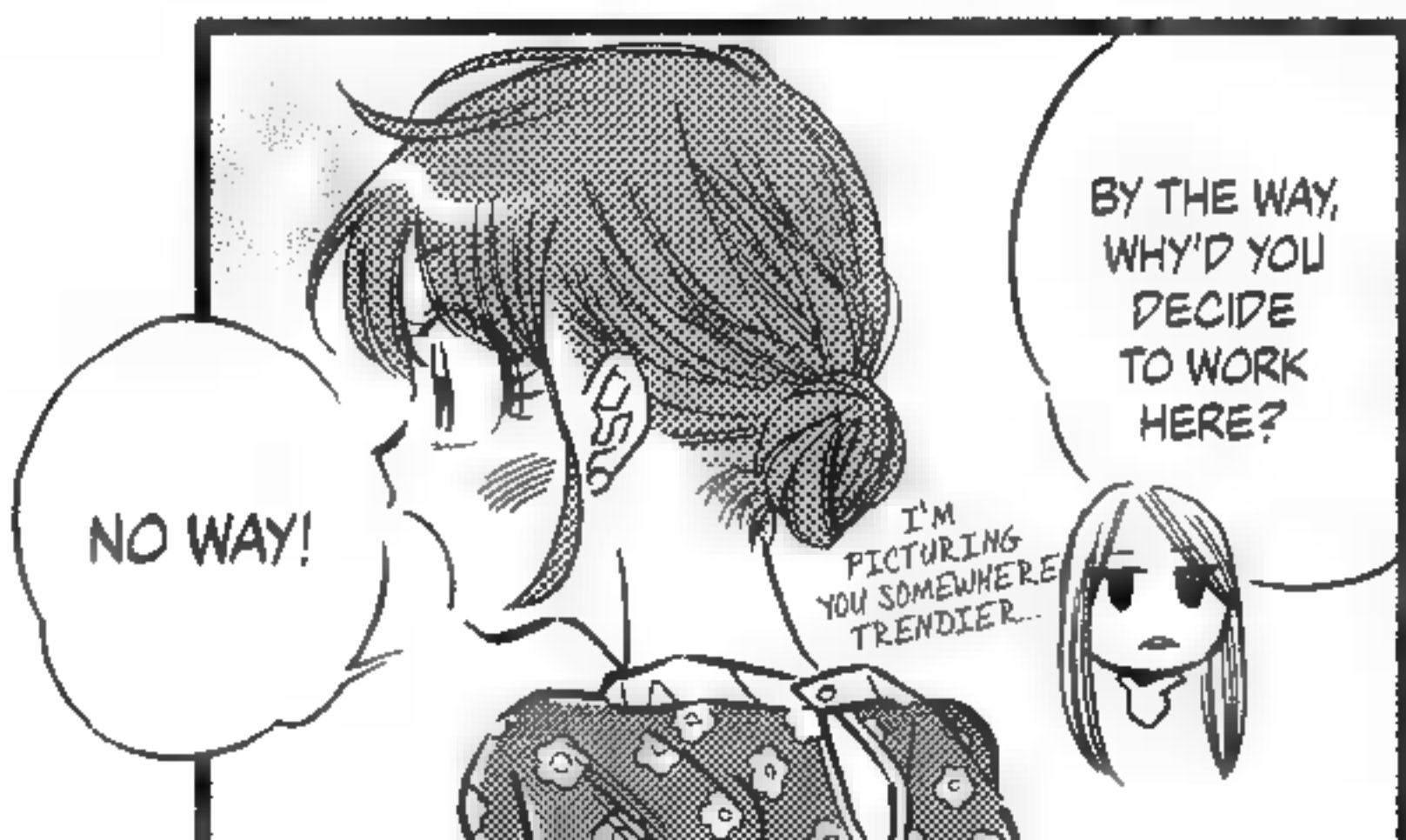
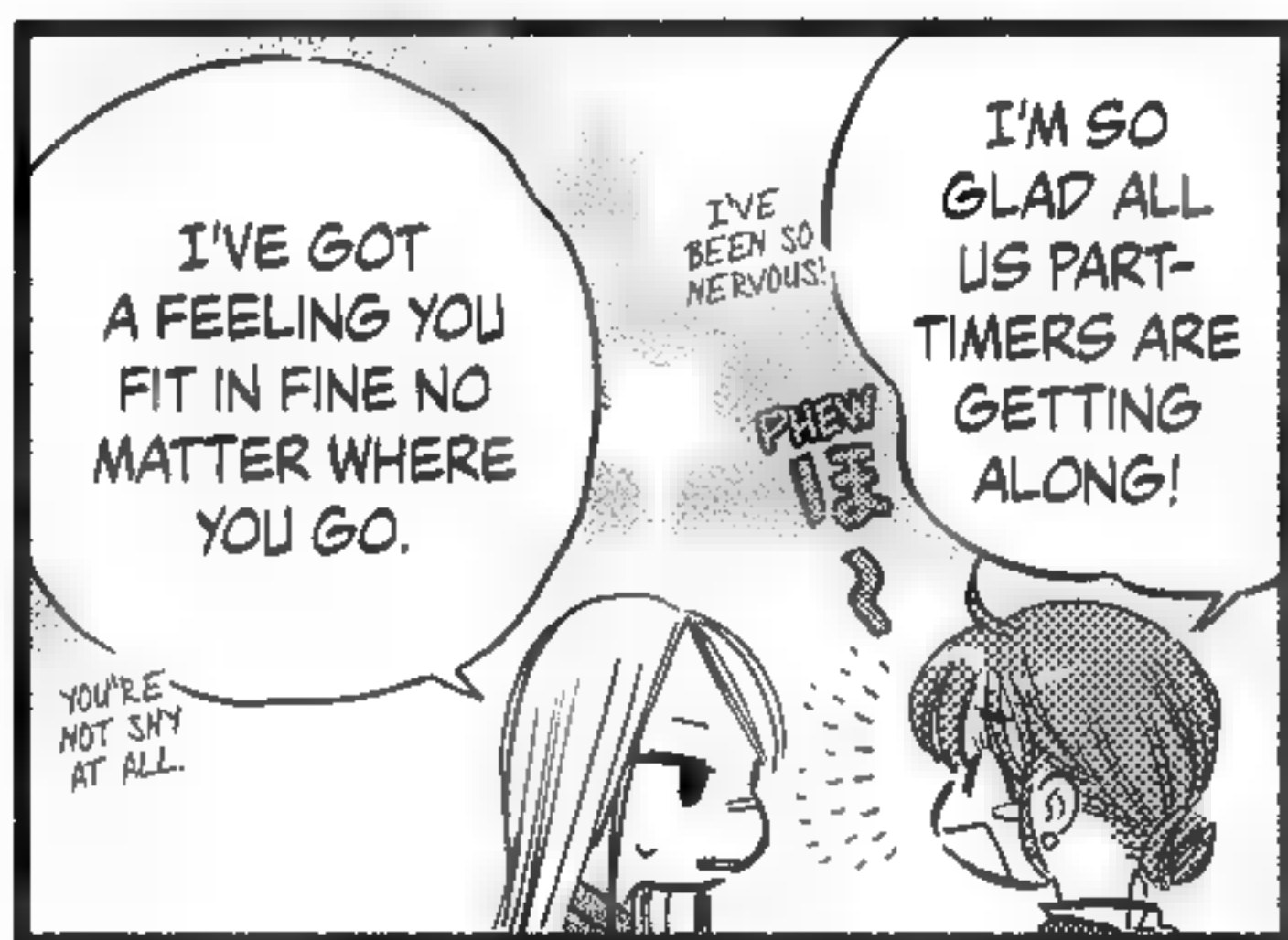
WHAT'RE
YOU
DRINKING,
IRIE?



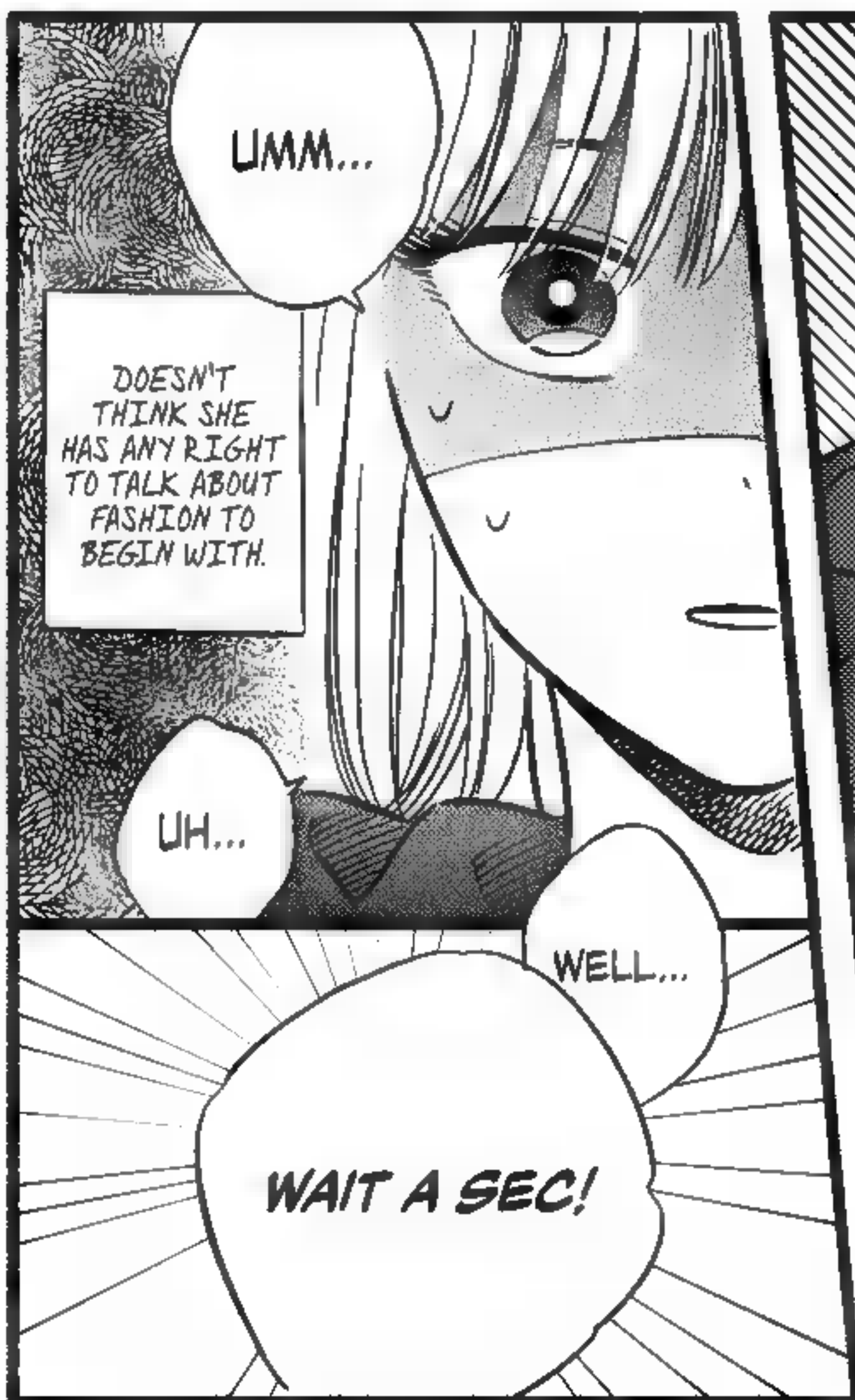
HE'S...

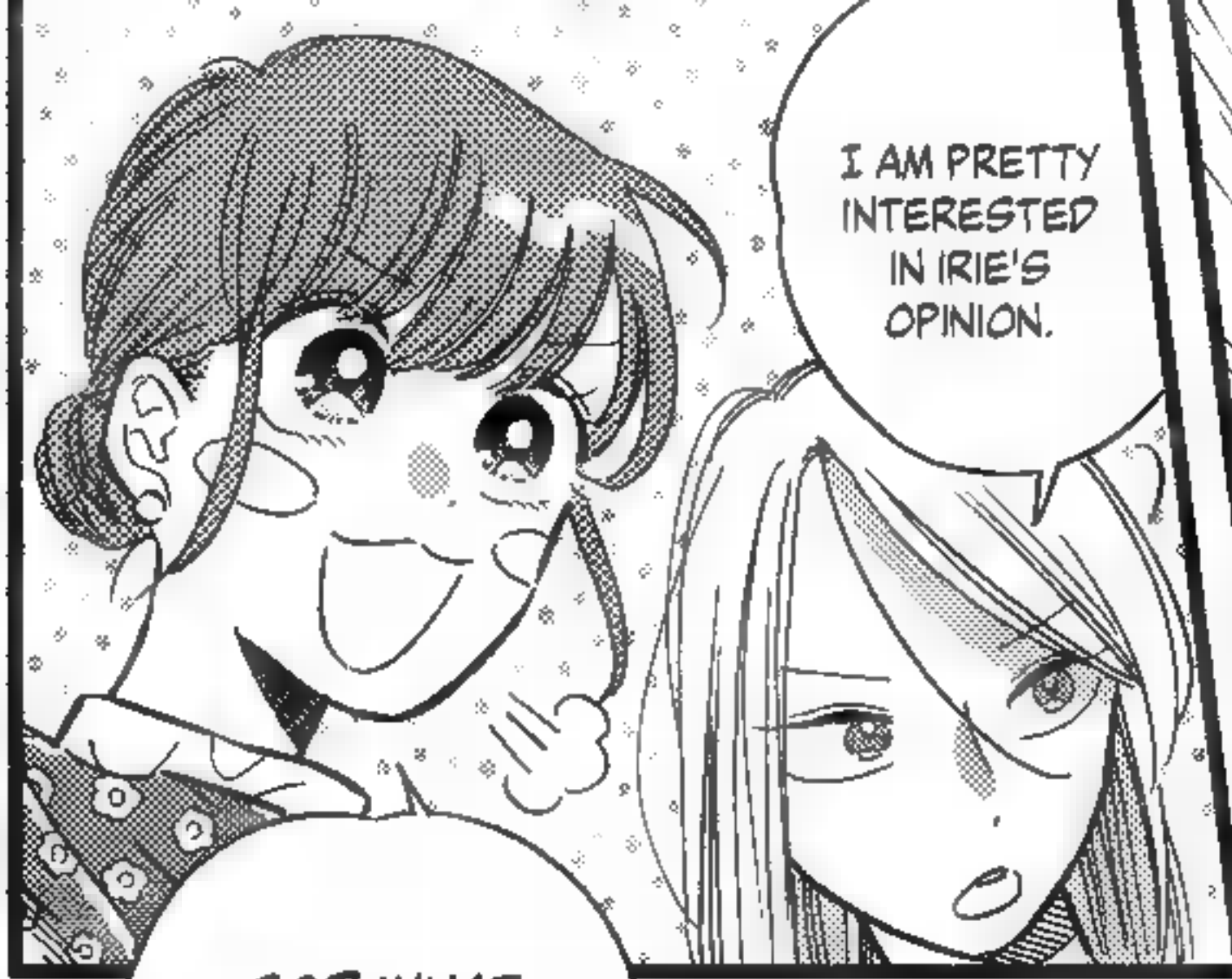
...THE GUY
I LIKE.

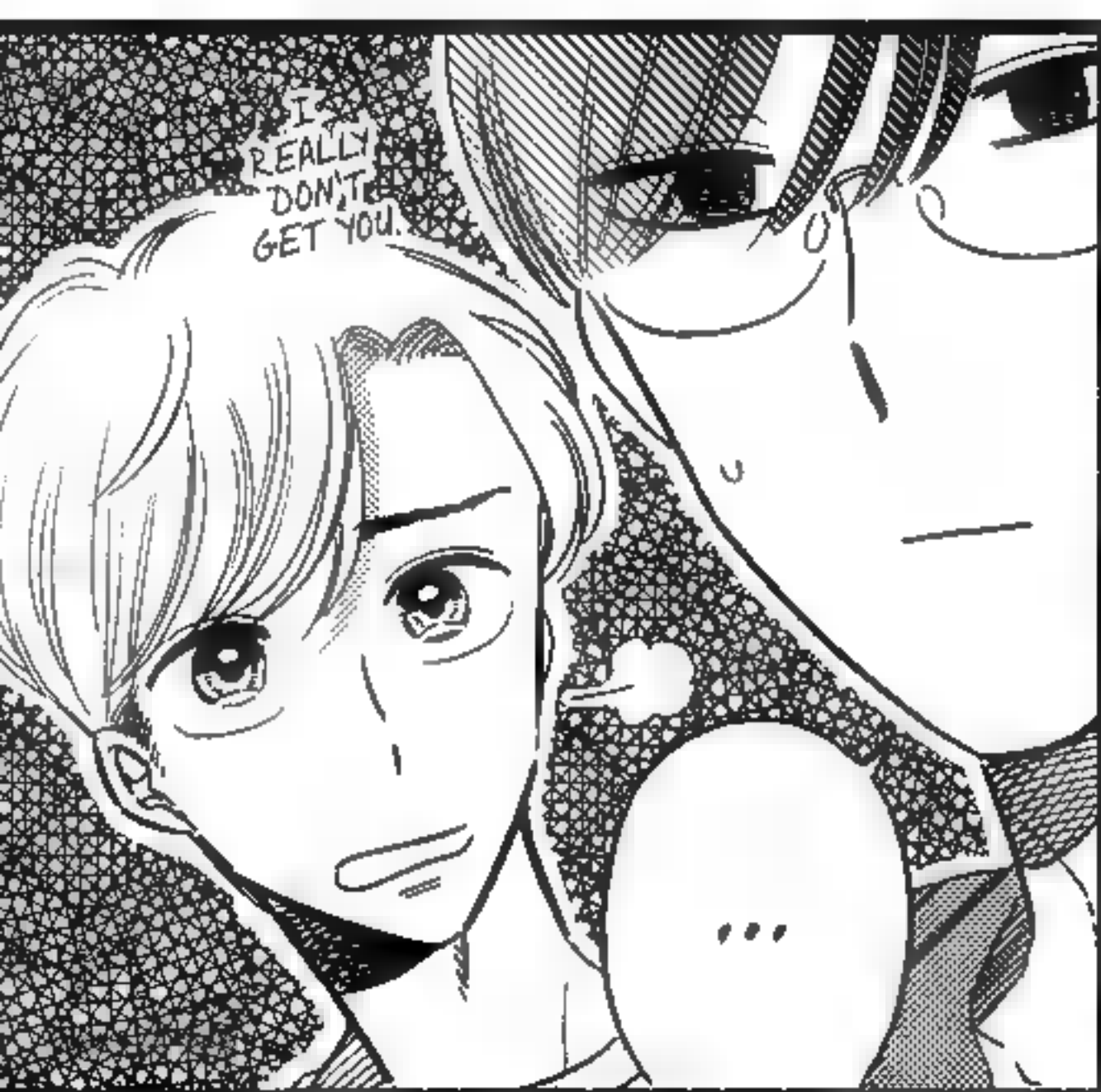
TANAKA-SAN!









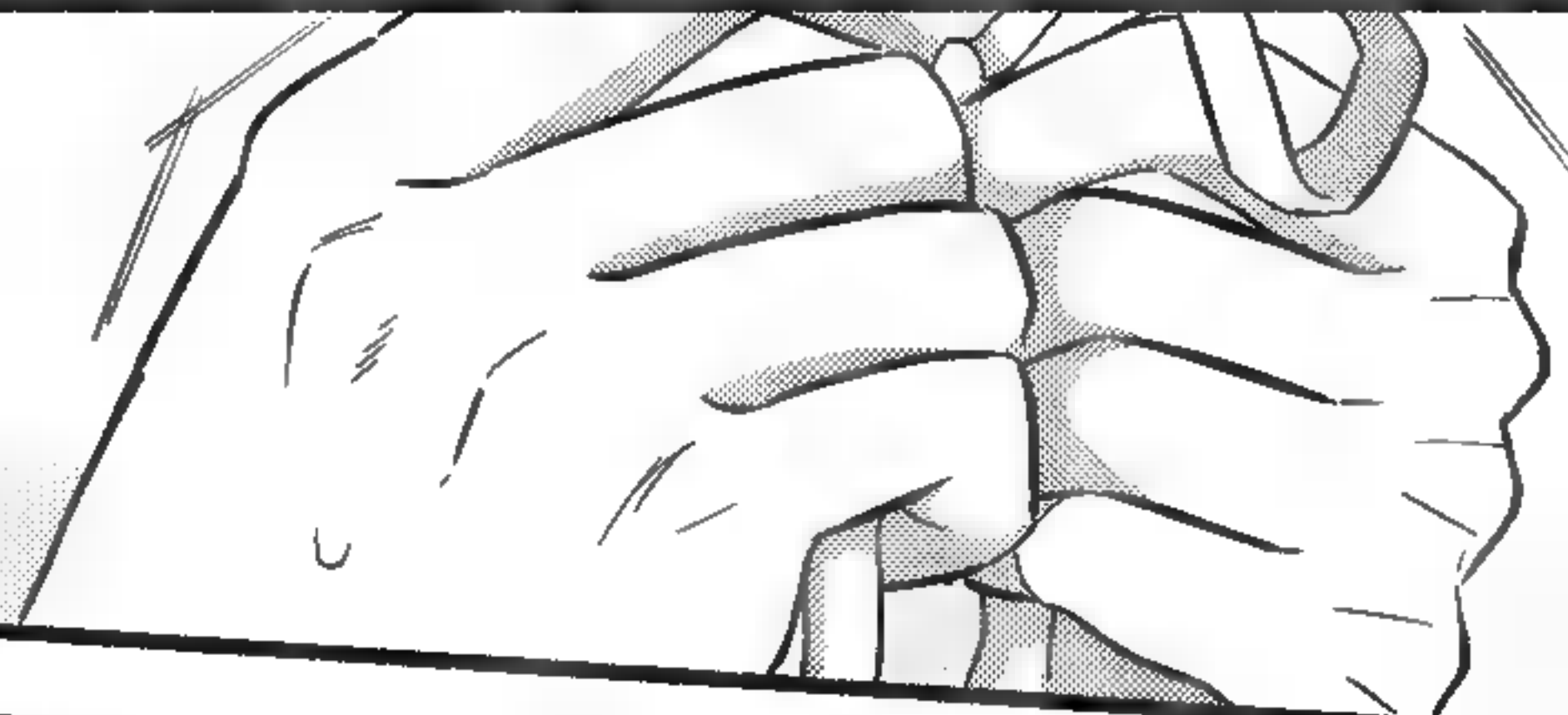




I WONDER
IF I'VE BEEN
DOING IT
RIGHT...



TANAKA-SAN.



OH...
W-WELL...



HAS THAT
DISH YOU
ORDERED
EARLIER
COME YET?

H-HUH?

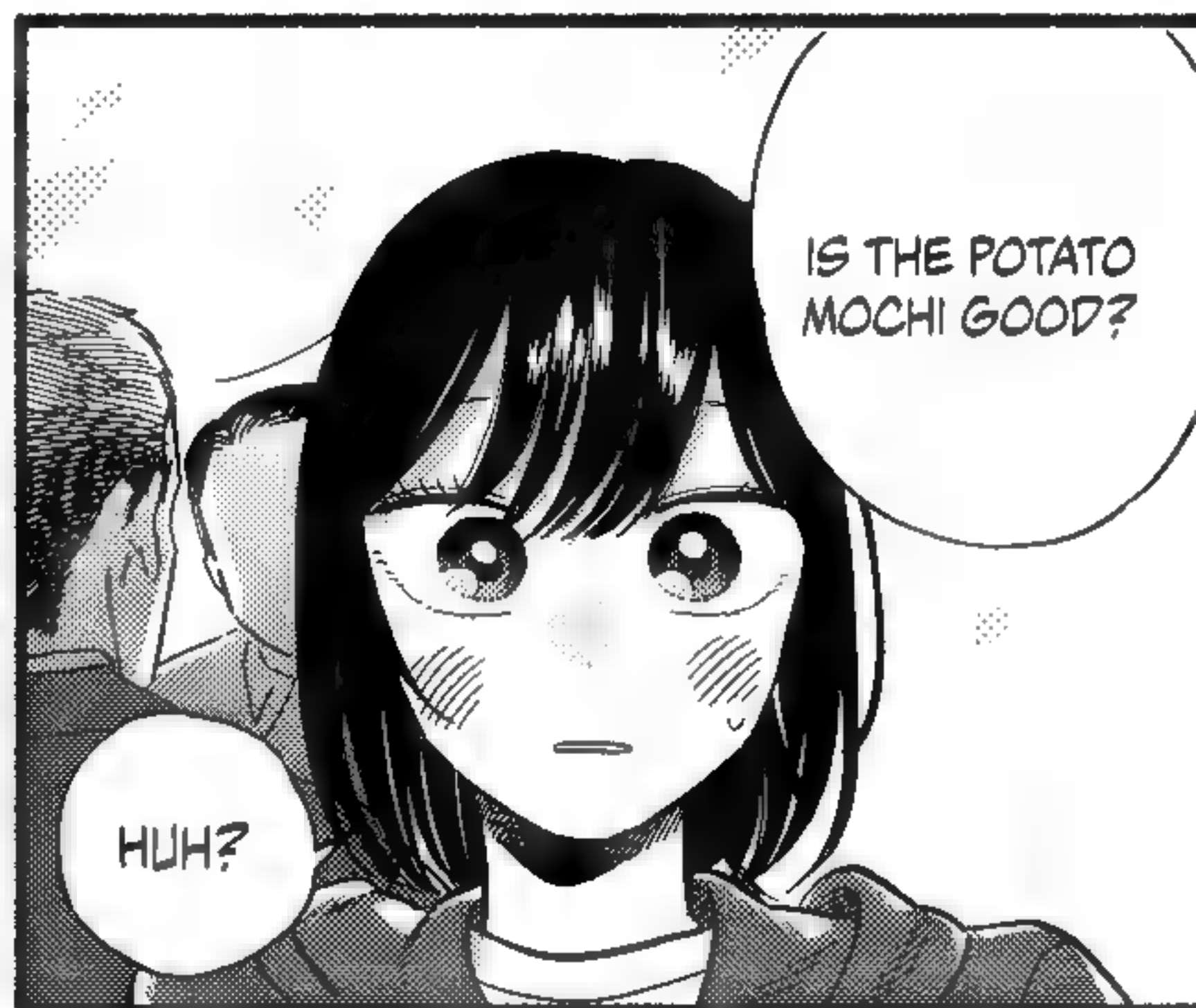
UH, YES?

H...
HE SAW
ME...

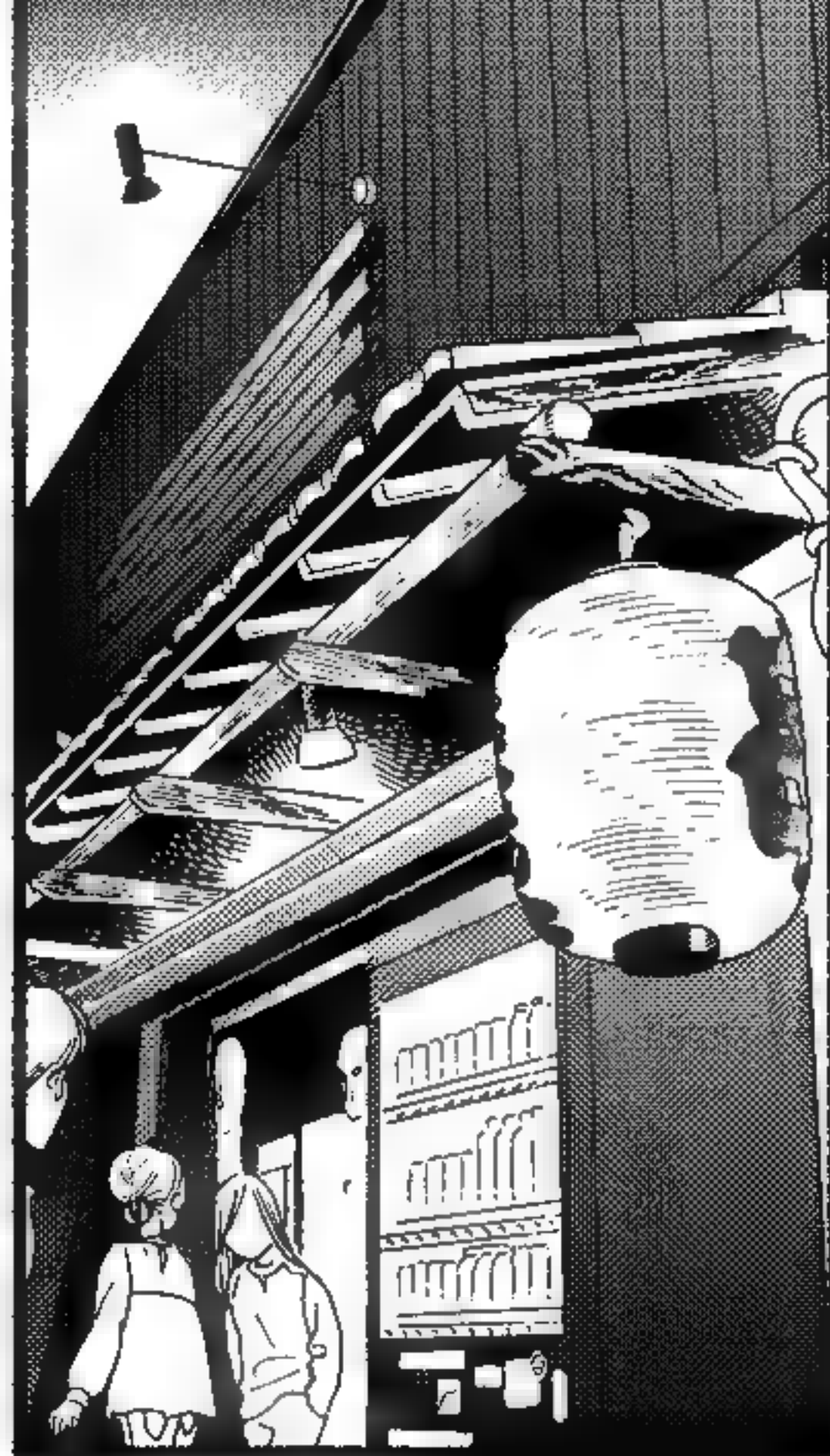
AH--

EACH PERSON
ORDERED WHATEVER
THEY LIKED.











YOU'VE GOTTA
WALK TO THE STATION,
RIGHT TANAKA-SAN?

OH,
YES.



SHE'S IN
YOUR HANDS
NOW, IRIE!

DON'T
LEAVE HER
BEHIND!



SEE
YA.

THANKS
SO MUCH!

WELL,
THIS IS WHERE
WE PART.



WELL THEN...



LET'S DO
KARAOKE
NEXT
TIME!

GOOD-
BYE!

I'M NOT
GOING!





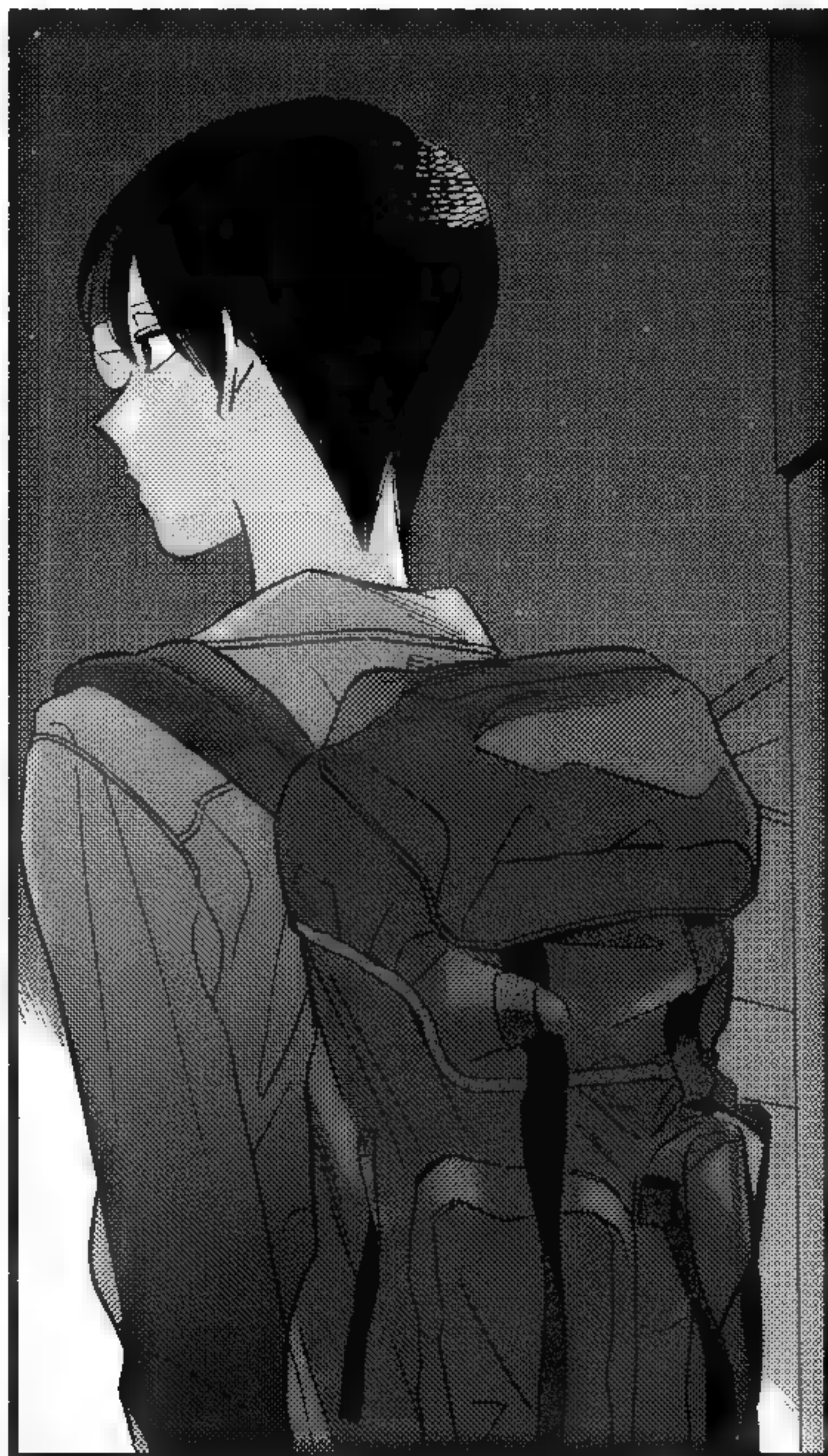
DO YOU
CROSS AT THE
NEXT LIGHT?

JOLT
ビュッ

HUH?

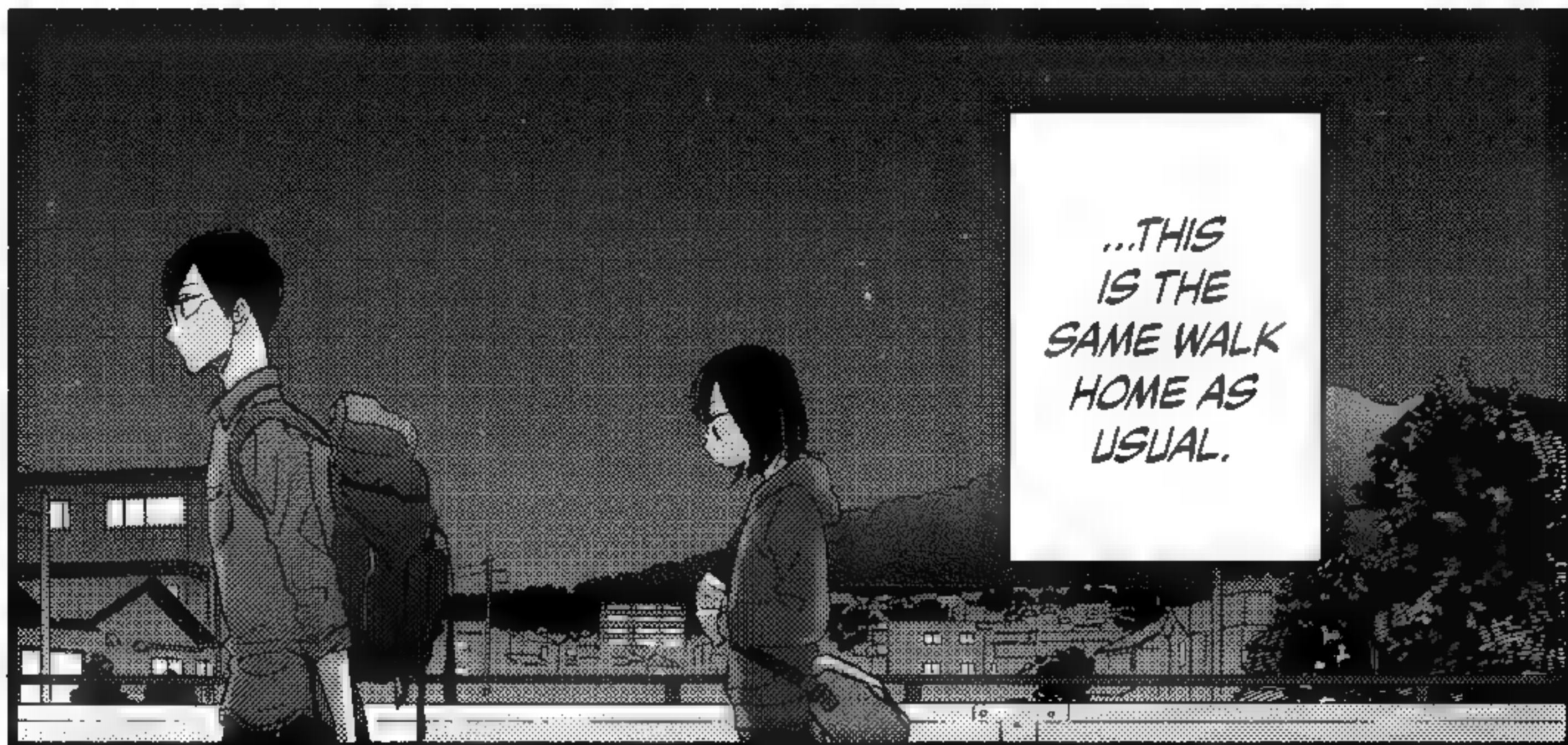
UH...

YES...



FOR
IRIE-KUN...





...THIS
IS THE
SAME WALK
HOME AS
USUAL.



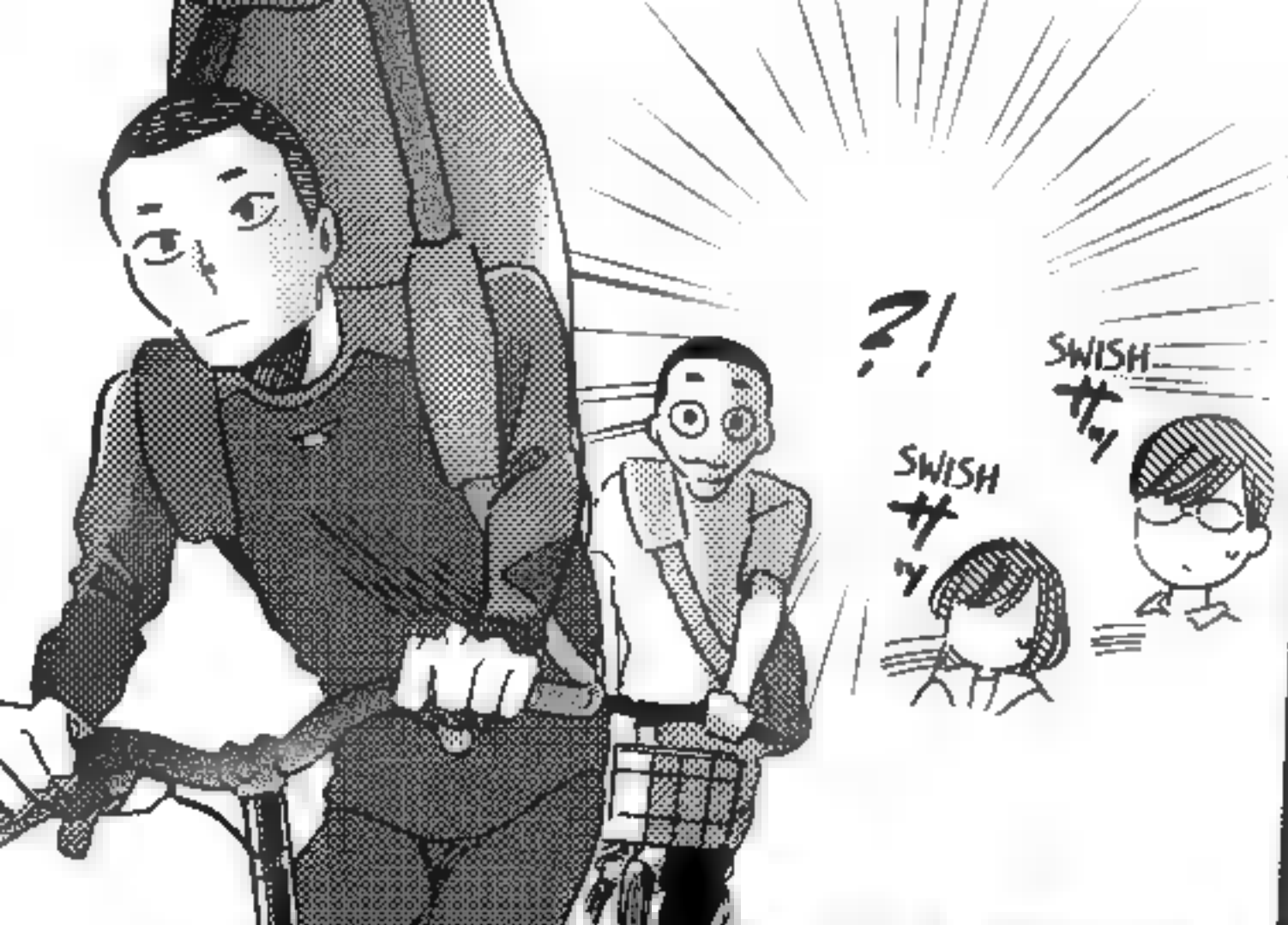
BUT FOR
ME...



...FEELS LIKE
SOMETHING
REALLY
SPECIAL.



...THIS
NORMAL
WALK
HOME...

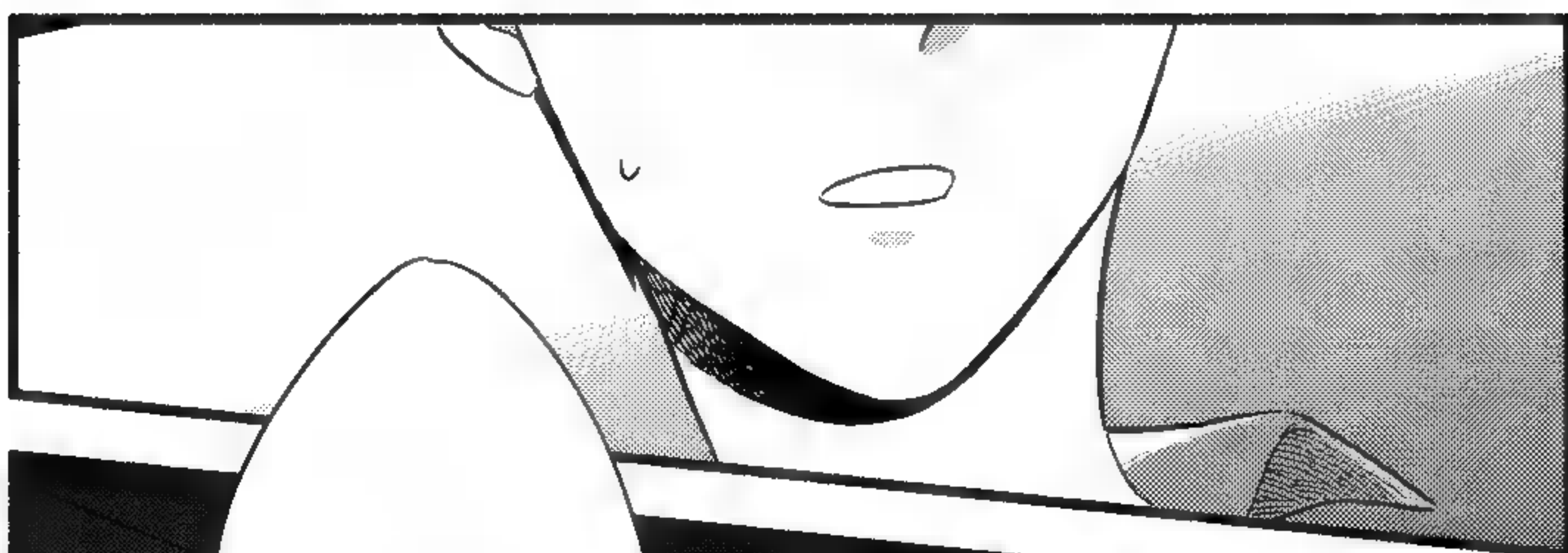


MOBUKO'S QUIRKS:
SHE HAS TROUBLE
SPEAKING UP TO TELL
PEOPLE THINGS.





WHICH
ALLEY DO YOU
TAKE NEXT...?



WATCH OUT!





TH...

THAT
STARTLED ME...



OH!

...

FIDGET
もぞ...

SIGH
は







SO THEN...

YES.



I SEE.

OH

UM, MY
PLACE IS RIGHT
OVER THERE!

UH...



I'LL BE
GOING.

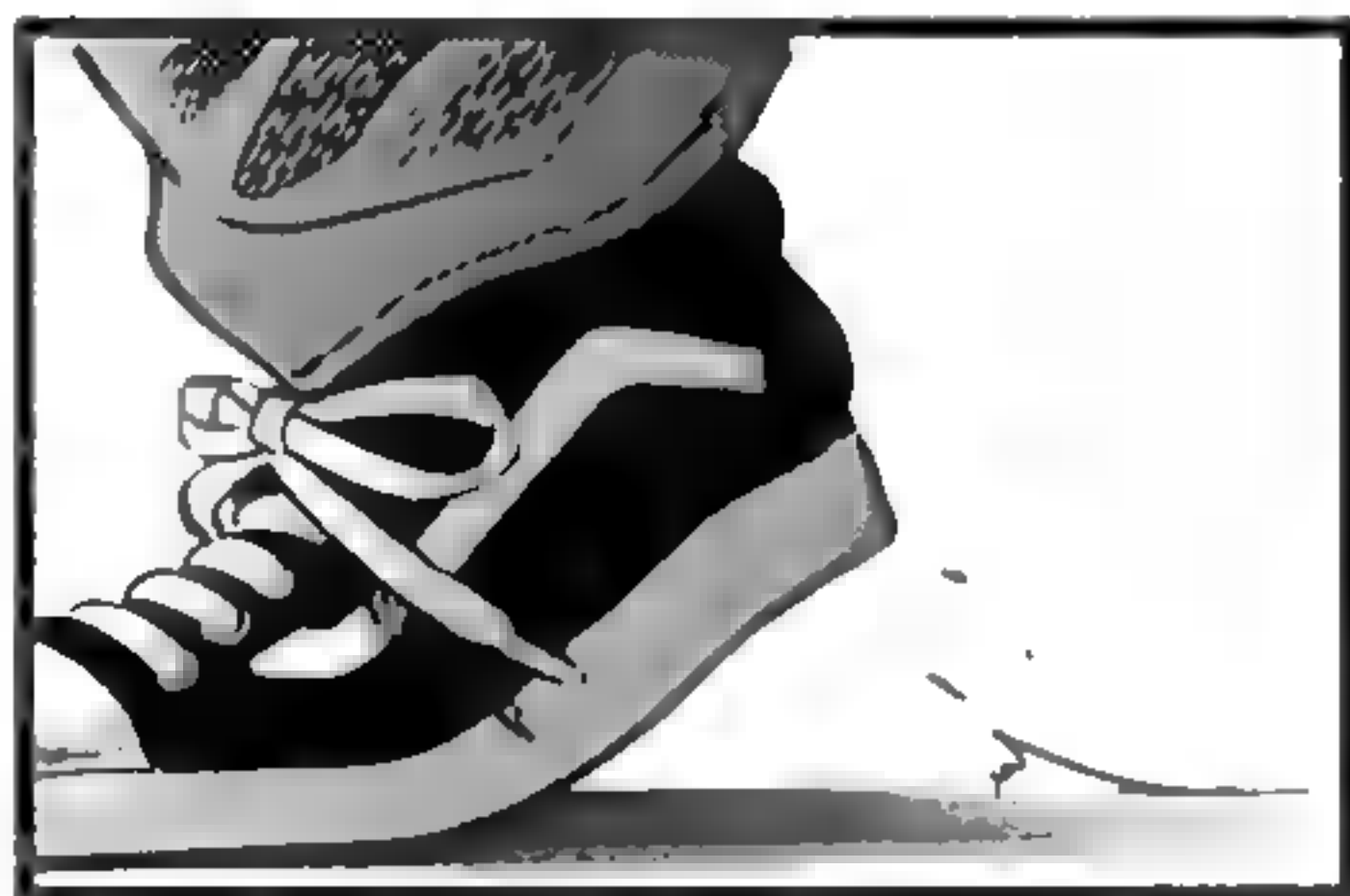
I--



SEE YOU
LATER.

RIGHT.
BE CAREFUL.

OH







PHEW...

...I WAS
ABLE TO
HIDE IT.

SIGH

EVERY-
THING HE
TOUCHED...

...MY EAR,
MY CHEEK,
EVEN MY
HAIR...



...ARE BRIMMING
WITH WARMTH.



IT'S HOT...

WHAT EVERYONE ORDERED AT THE IZAKAYA





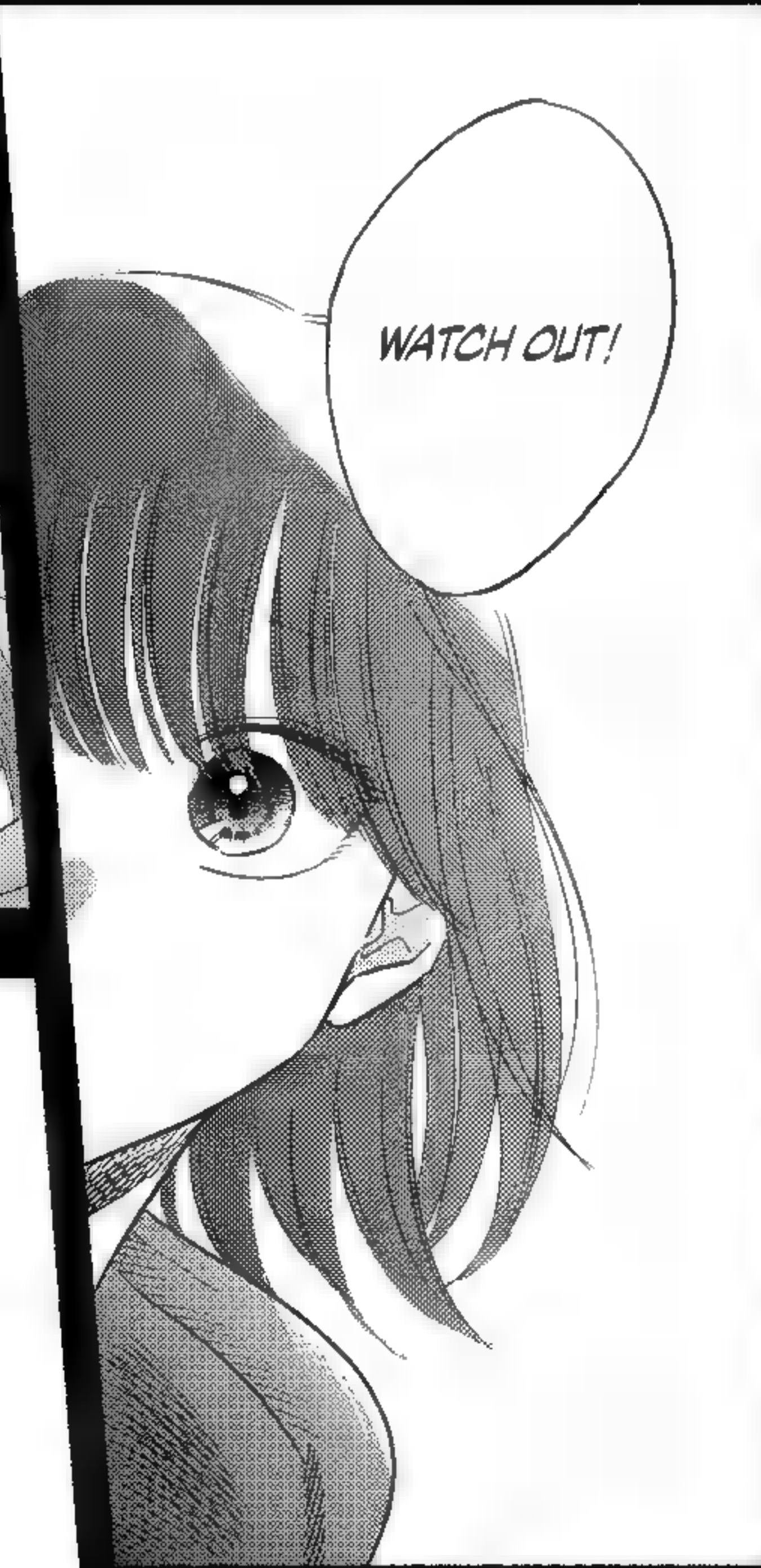
ON THE WAY
HOME FROM
ABE-SAN'S
WELCOME
PARTY,

IRIE-KUN
WALKED ME
HOME SINCE
WE WERE
GOING THE
SAME WAY.

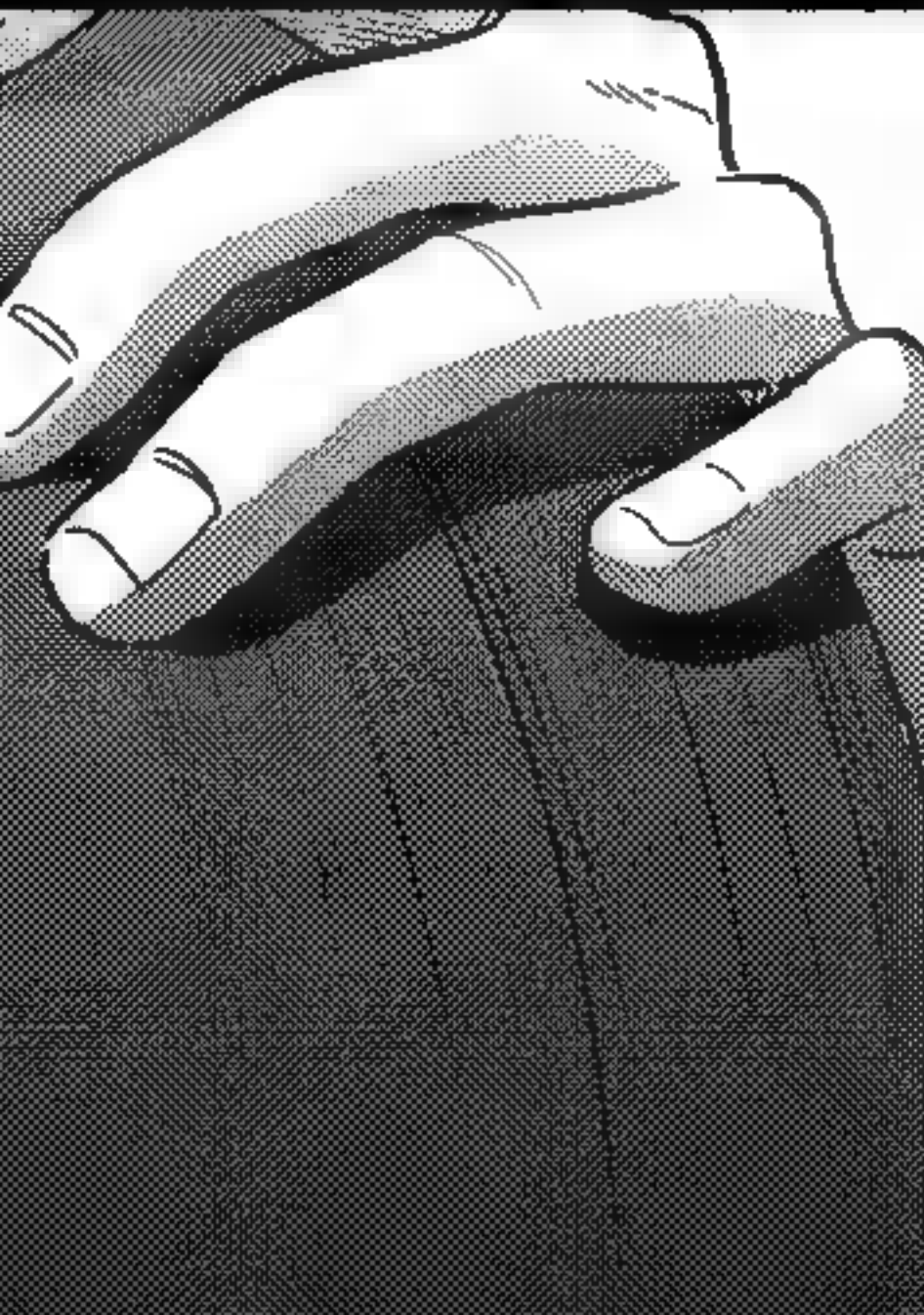
CHAPTER 3



THINKING
THE BICYCLE
WAS GOING
TO HIT ME,



WATCH OUT!



HE PULLED ME
TOWARDS HIM.



*I'VE BEEN
THINKING ABOUT
IT EVER SINCE...*



OH?

THIS
REGISTER'S
OPEN, MA'AM.



SORRY

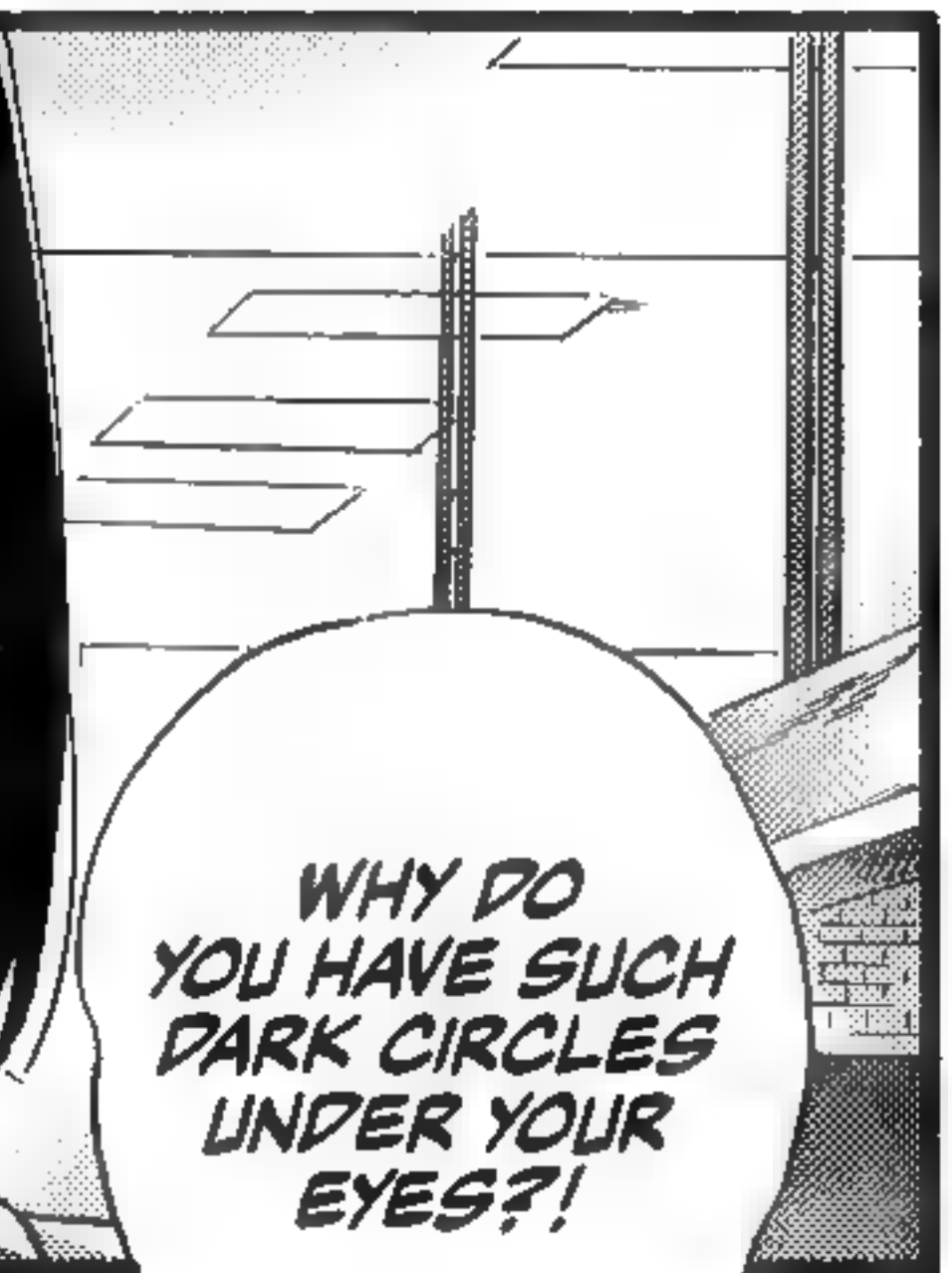
YOU'RE AN
EMPLOYEE?



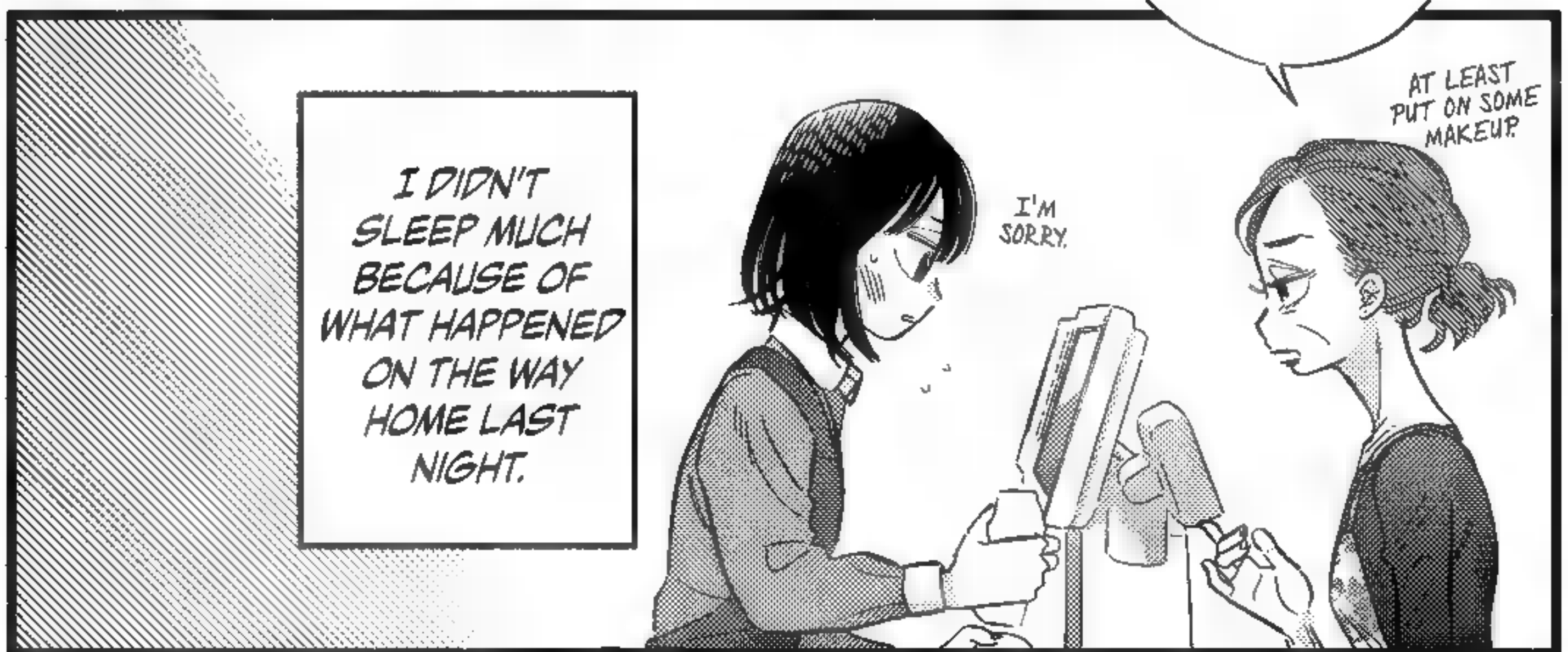
YOU WERE
SO QUIET,
I HARDLY
REALIZED...
HM?



HUH?



WHY DO
YOU HAVE SUCH
DARK CIRCLES
UNDER YOUR
EYES?!



I DIDN'T
SLEEP MUCH
BECAUSE OF
WHAT HAPPENED
ON THE WAY
HOME LAST
NIGHT.

I'M
SORRY.

AT LEAST
PUT ON SOME
MAKEUP



IT WASN'T TOO MESSY, WAS IT?



IRIE-KUN HAD HIS HAND ON MY HEAD...



I SCURRIED BACK HOME TO AVOID LETTING MY FEELINGS SHOW.



HOW EMBARRASSING...

OHHH...



...I FORGOT TO THANK HIM!

IRIE-KUN WALKED ME HOME, BUT...

WAIT...

I'LL BE GOING

OH

RAMBLE

RAMBLE



AND I HAD THAT EXPRESSION LIKE I WAS WEIRDED OUT...

IF ONLY I'D BEEN MORE LAID-BACK...

OHH... PLEASE LET ME REDO LAST NIGHT...

17
RAMBLE

I SUCK... WHERE ARE MY MANNERS? I'M SO SELFISH...

MOBUKO'S QUIRKS: SHE REVIEWS PAST EVENTS IN HER HEAD WITH SUCH SELF-LOATHING THAT SHE CAN'T FALL ASLEEP







...MY CHANCE
TO THANK HIM
FOR LAST
NIGHT...?!



GLANCE
チラ



...ARE WORKING
SIDE-BY-SIDE...

M...MAYBE
THIS COULD
BE...



BUT I CAN'T
SAY ANYTHING
SINCE WE'RE
IN CLASS.

OH
I FORGOT
MY ERASER.

IT HAS
NOTHING
TO DO WITH
WORK,
ANYWAY...

MOBUKO'S QUIRKS:
MUTTERS CREEPILY
TO HERSELF WHEN
SHE'S NERVOUS.

WE'RE
WORKING
RIGHT
NOW.

*HER
IMAGINATION

TURN
サ

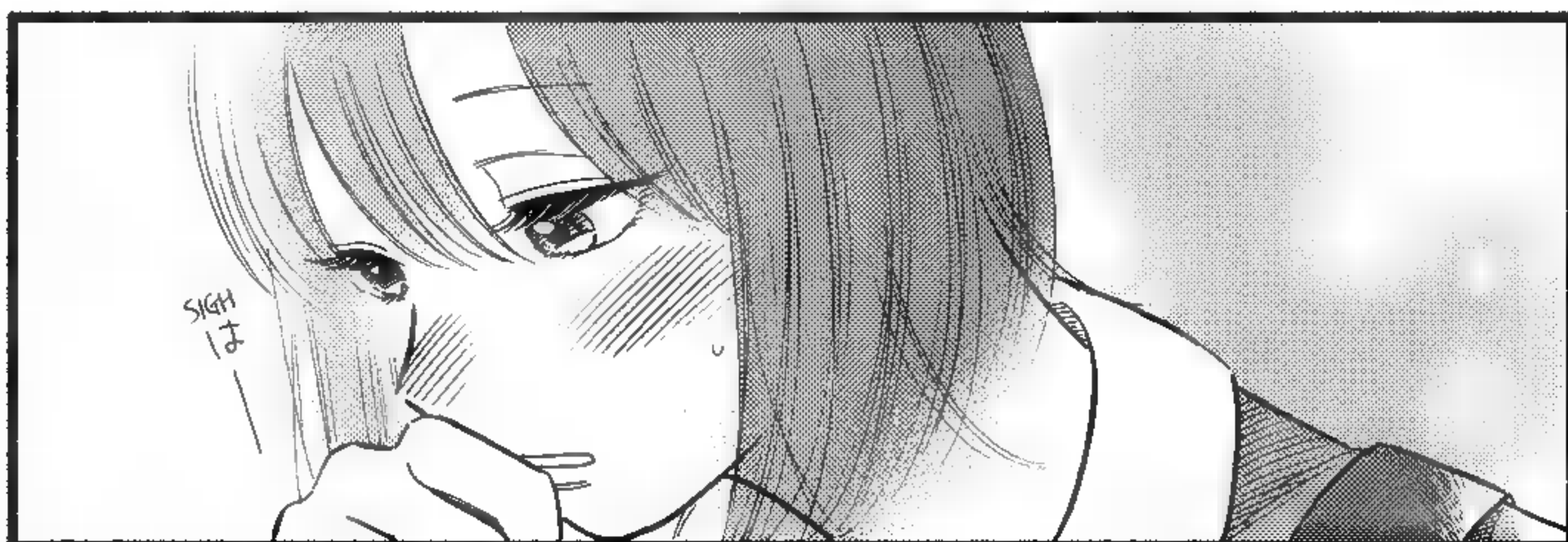
UGH...
I CAN'T...



RIGHT
NOW...



I CAN'T EVEN
BRING MYSELF
TO CASUALLY
START UP A
CONVERSATION.





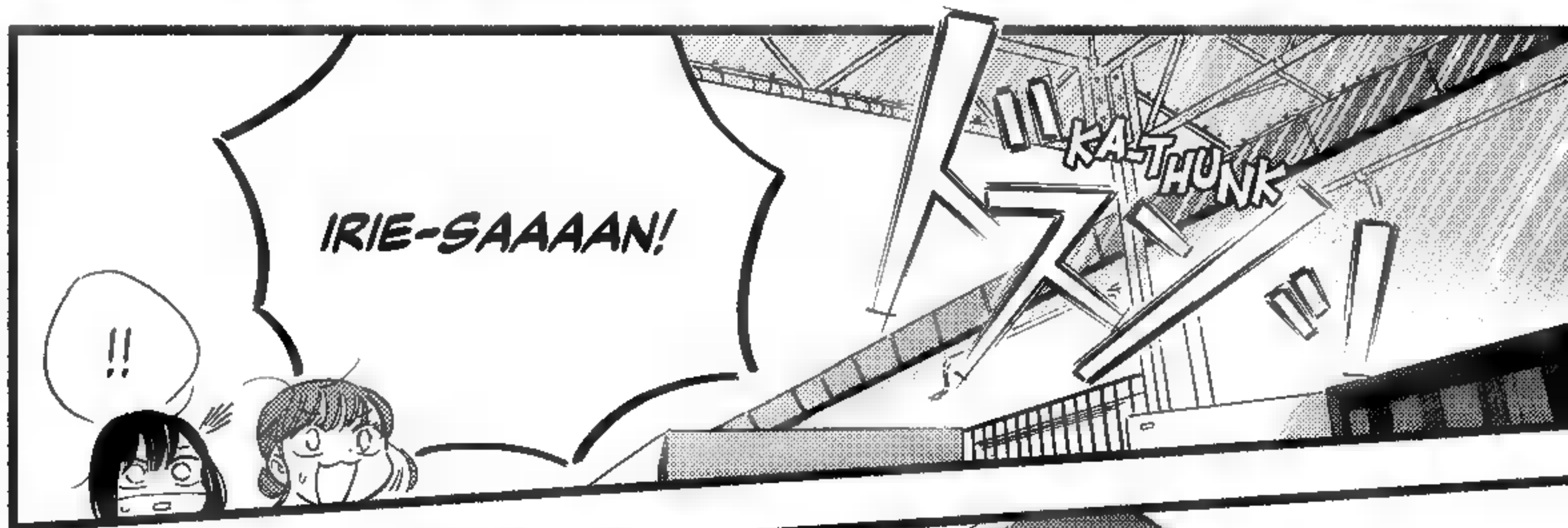


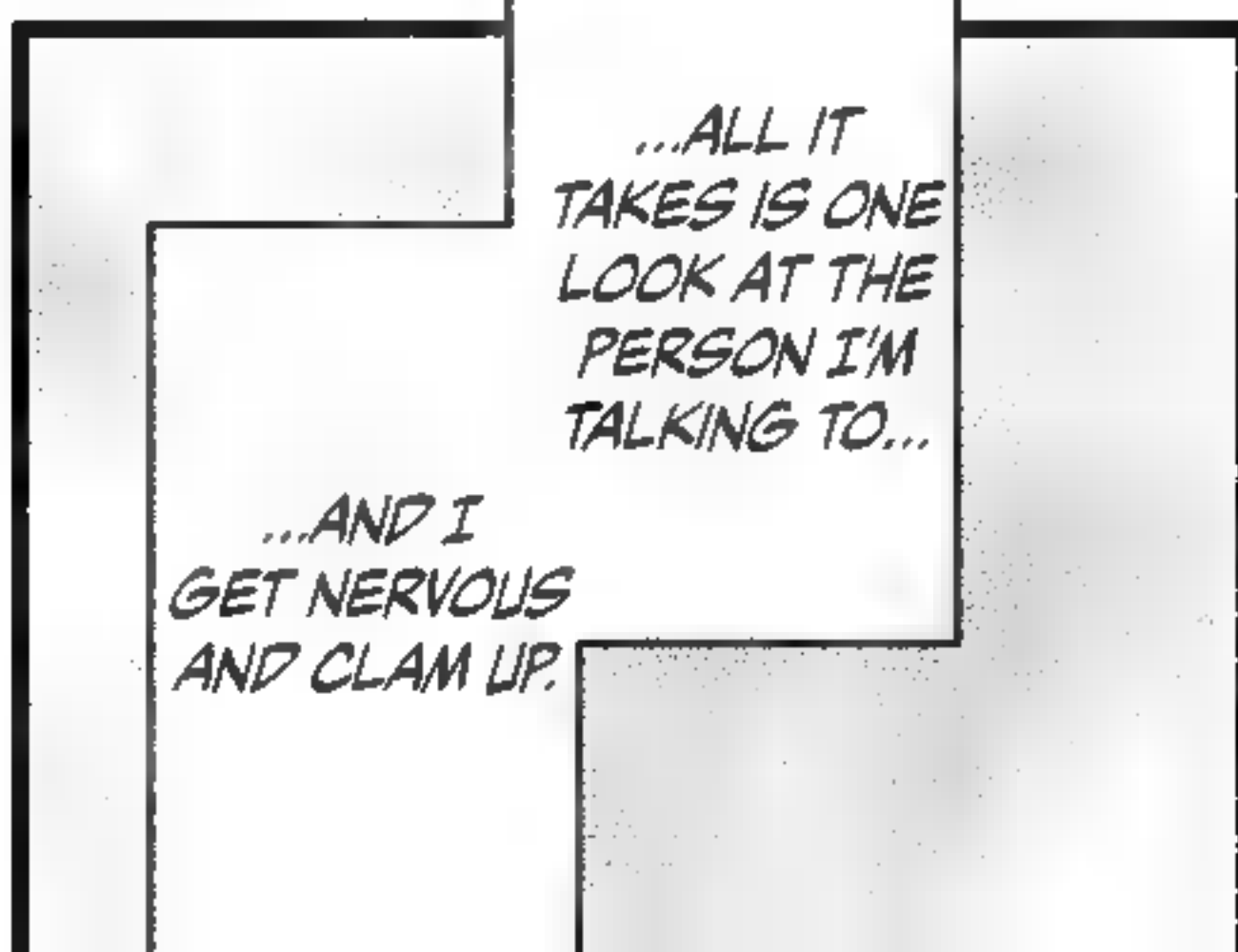
IS THIS
THE ONE YOU
WERE REACHING
FOR?

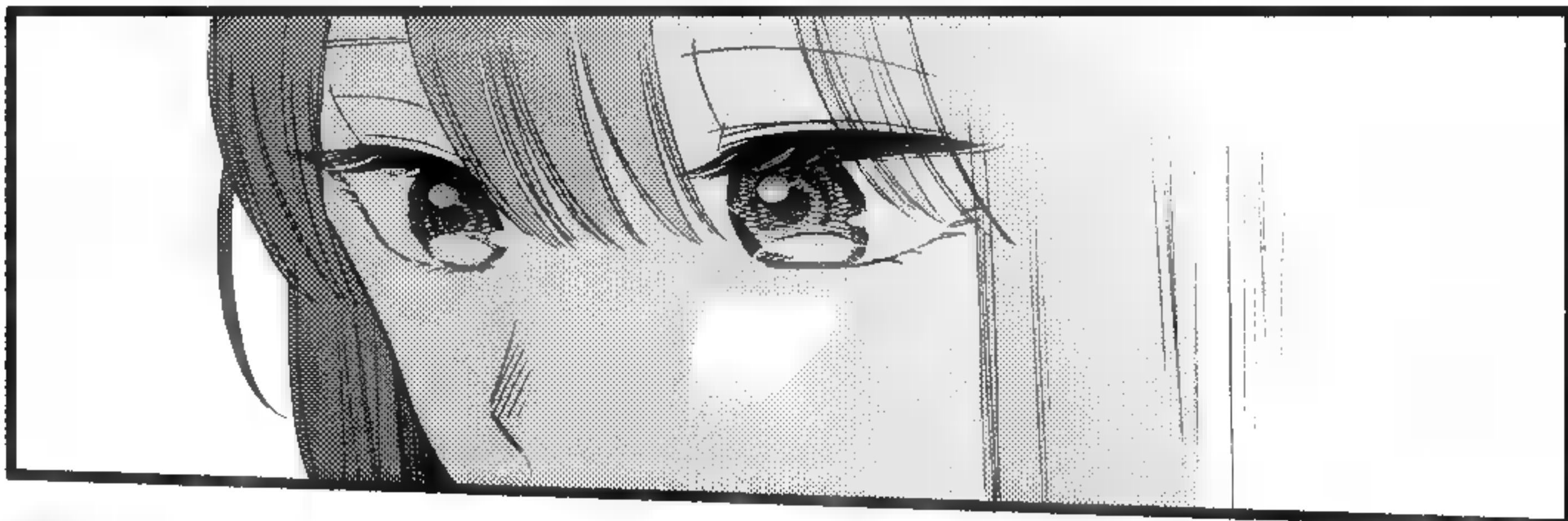
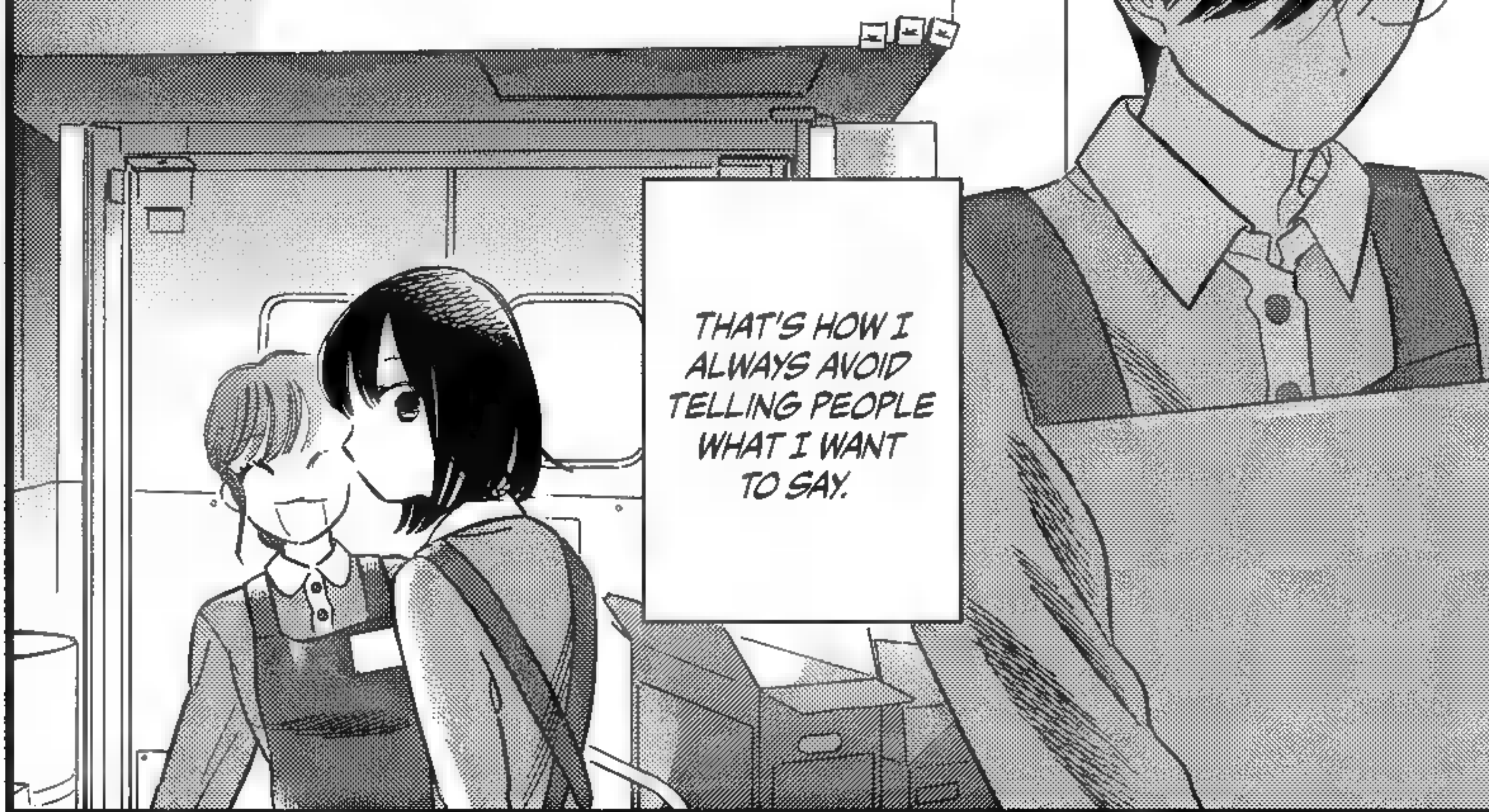


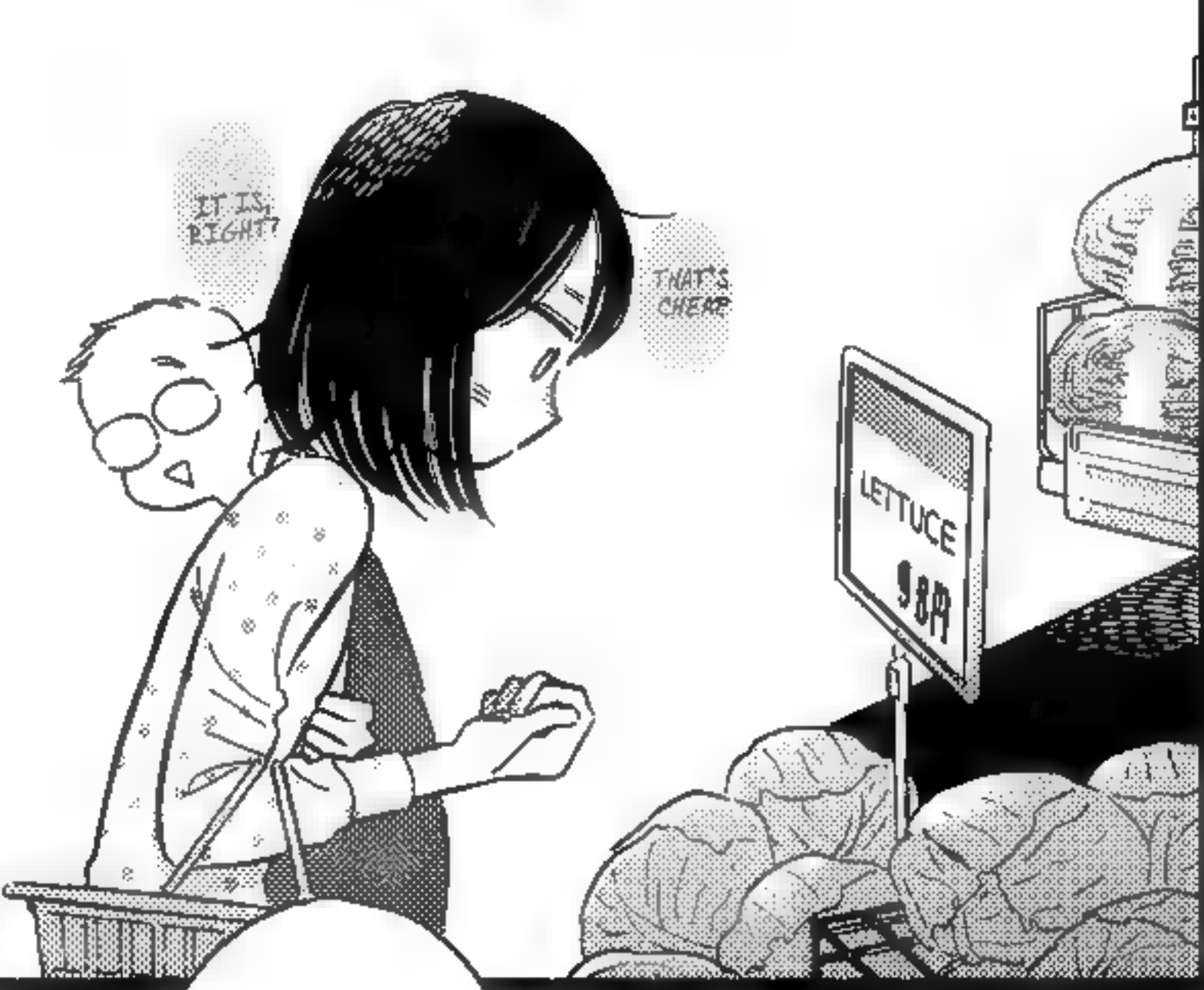
UH... YES.











IT IS,
RIGHT?

THAT'S
CHEAP

LETTUCE
98Y

WHAT
WOULD GO
WELL WITH
SHREDDED
CABBAGE?



IN
THE END,
I NEVER
THANKED
HIM...

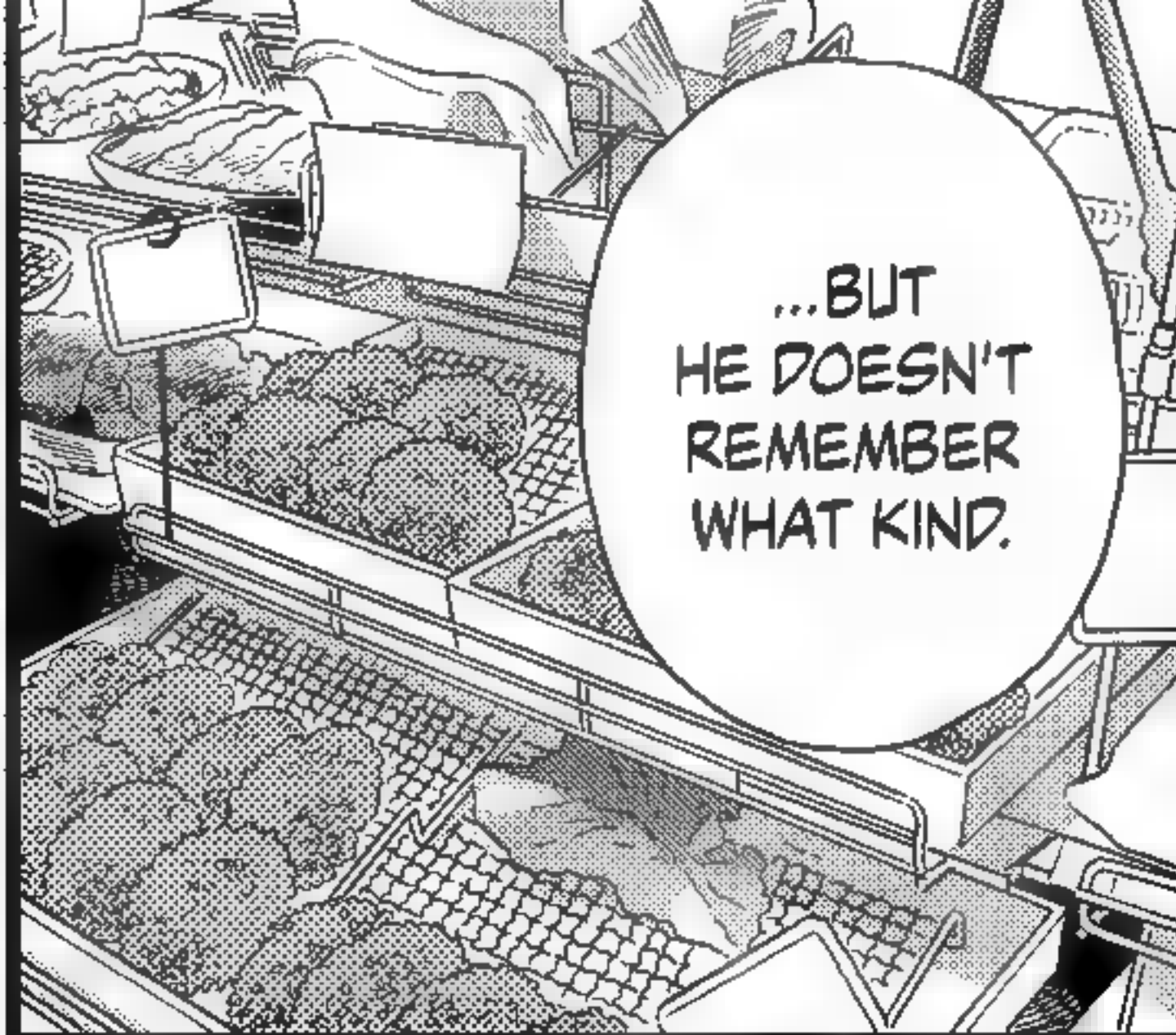


HUH?

MAYBE YOU
WOULD KNOW,
TANAKA-SAN.



OH.



...BUT
HE DOESN'T
REMEMBER
WHAT KIND.



I'M A
GIRL.

I'M NOT
A GUY!

SO,
LITTLE
GUY...



YES.
APPARENTLY
HE WAS SENT TO
GET SOME...

CROQUETTES?

HMPH
まう



IS THERE
ANYTHING YOU
DO REMEMBER?

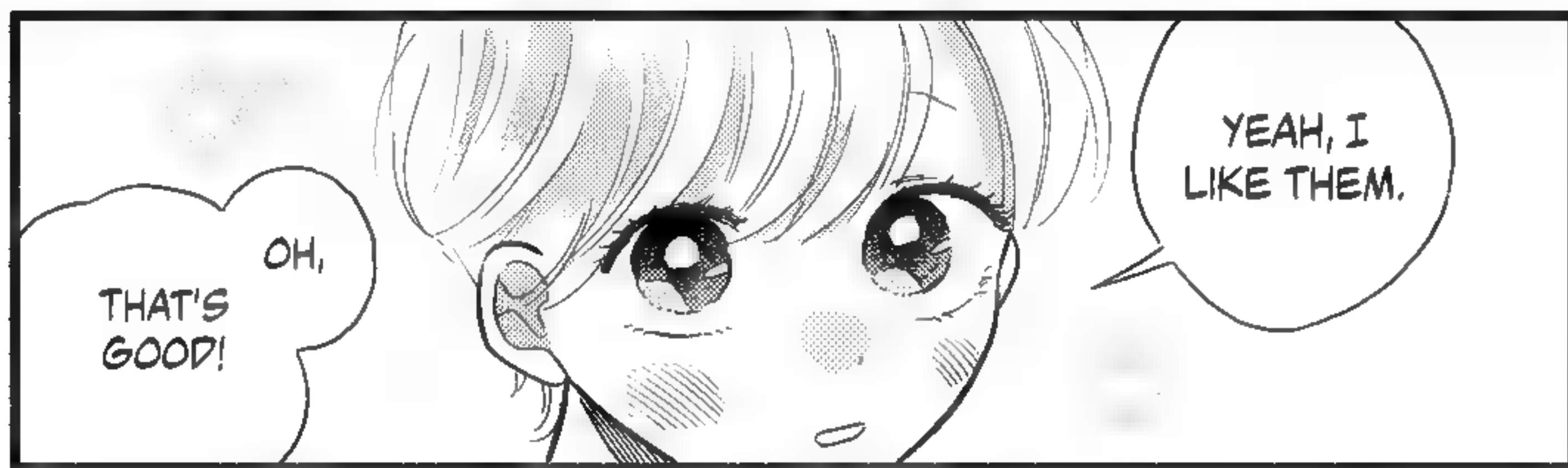
LIKE
THEIR SHAPE,
OR CHARACTER-
ISTICS?

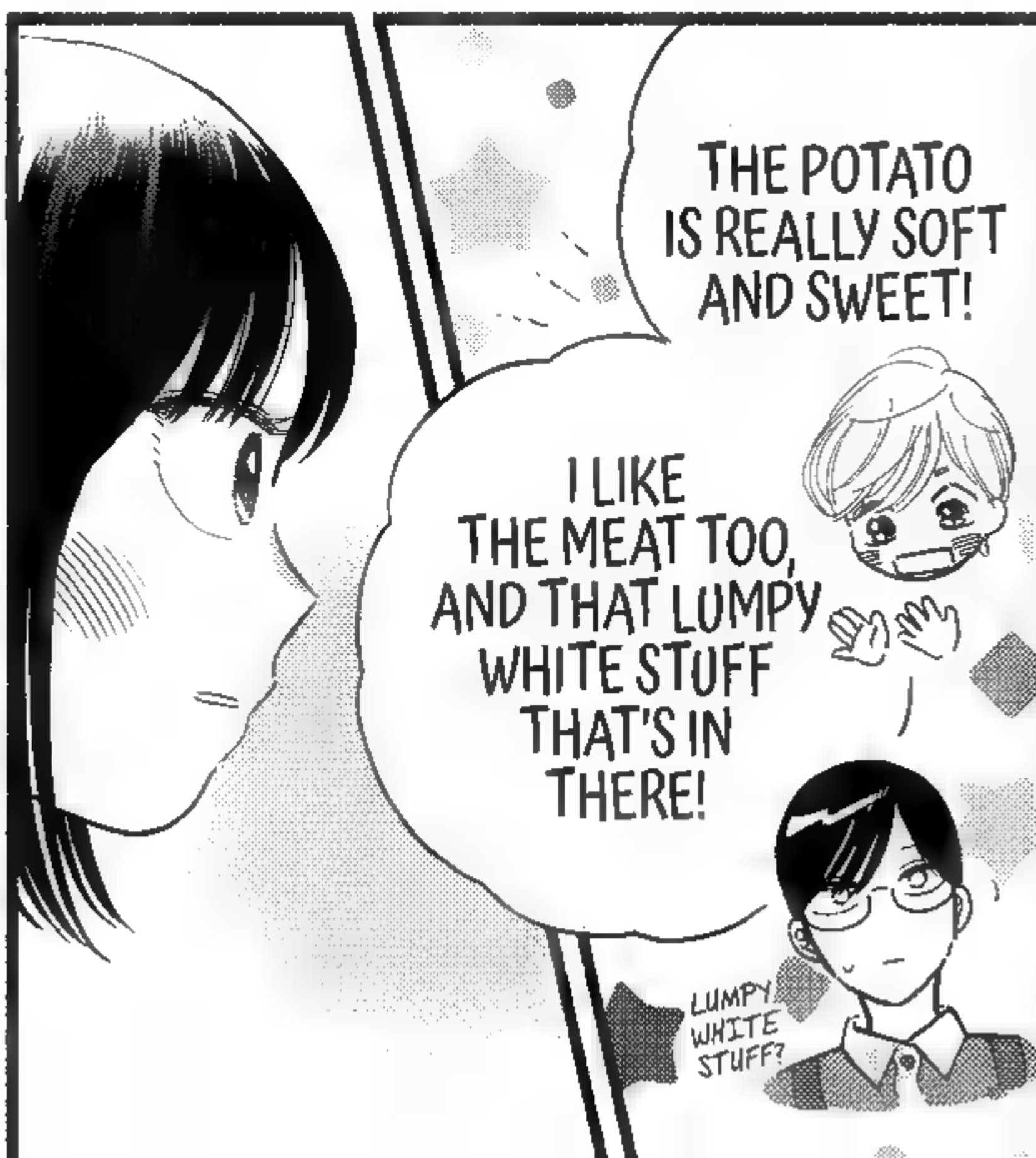
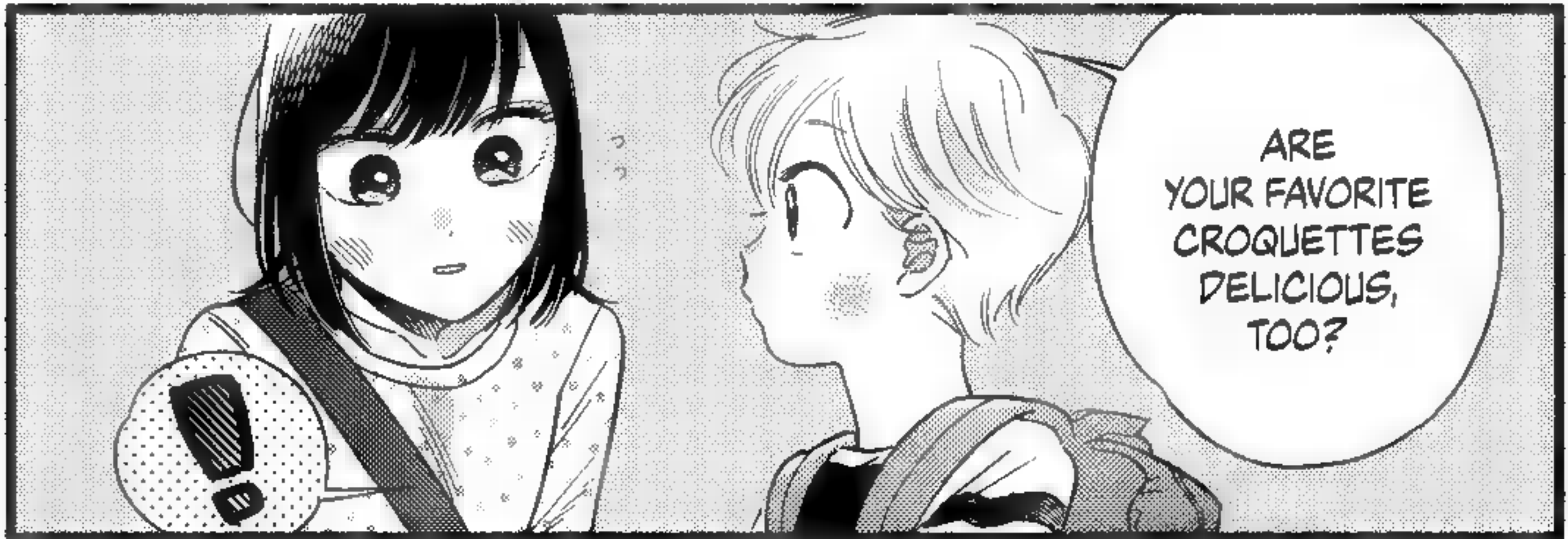
SORRY.



WHAT'S A
"CHARACTERISTIC?"

UM...







IT'S CALLED A
MEAT AND POTATO
CROQUETTE.



I LOVE
THAT KIND,
TOO.



OH,
I THINK
THE LUMPY
WHITE STUFF
IS SHIRATAKI
NOODLES...
UM...

I
REMEMBER!
**THIS
IT IS!**



MISTER,
MISS...



MAYBE IT WAS
PRESUMPTUOUS
OF ME TO TALK
ABOUT MYSELF
LIKE THAT...

AHH
I'M
SORRY

I SEE.

UM...





YOU WERE
A BIG HELP.



THANK YOU
SO MUCH.



OH...



N--

NO, IT WAS
NOTHING...



I FEEL
RELIEVED,

EVEN THOUGH
I DON'T THINK
I HELPED ALL
THAT MUCH.

WITH JUST
A WORD OF
THANKS...



THEY
THANKED
ME SO
FORMALLY...

...THAT I
FEEL KIND OF
EMBARRASSED.



I WANT TO
EXPRESS...



SORRY FOR
STOPPING
YOU.

WELL, HAVE A
GOOD EVENING.

UH, SURE.



I SHOULD
APOLOGIZE,
ACTUALLY.

NOT
AT ALL.

NO,
IT'S
FINE.



THOUGH
I'M STILL
REALLY EM-
BARRASSED...

AND
HOT...



FROM
NOW ON,
I HOPE
WE CAN
TALK MORE
NORMALLY.

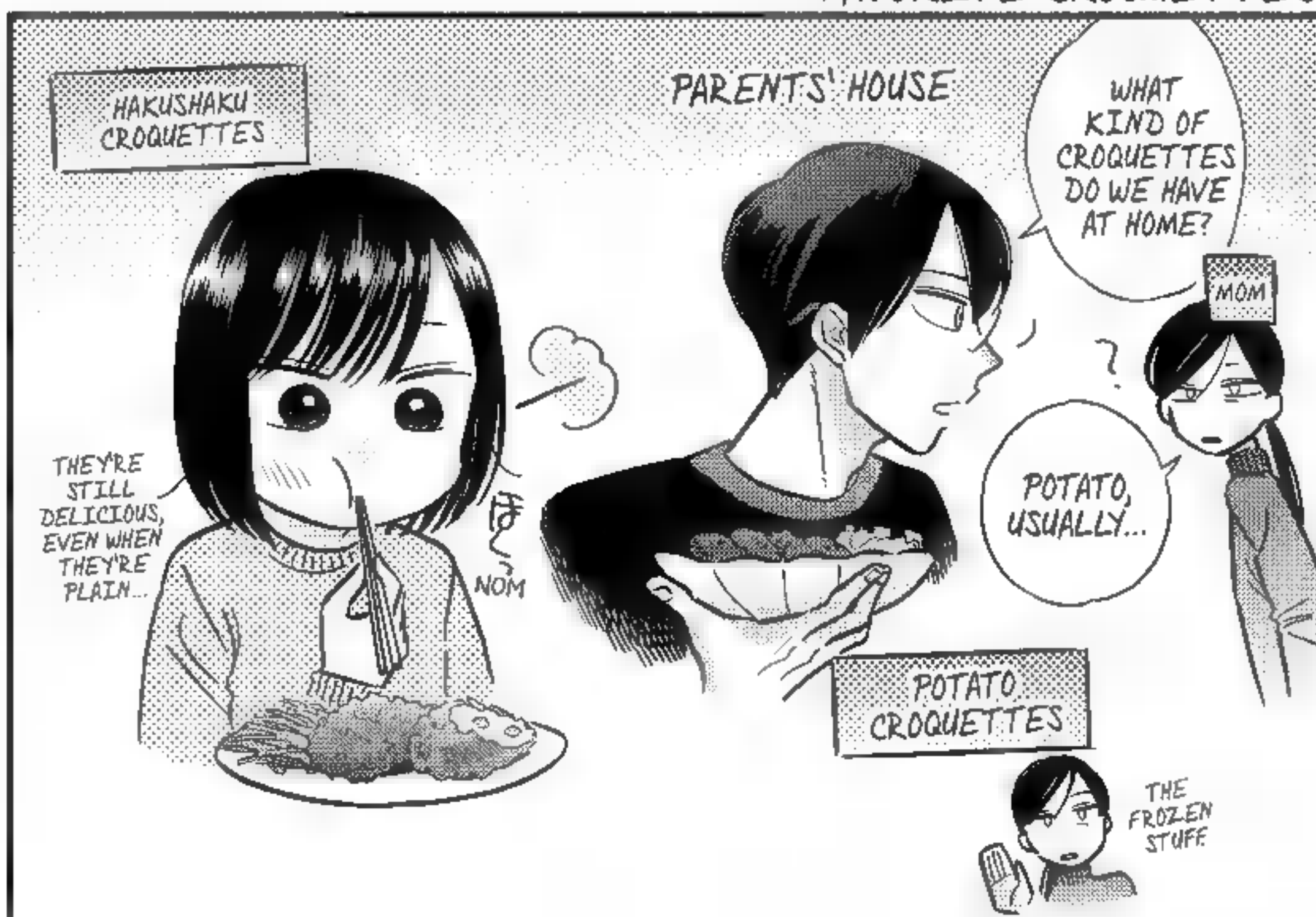
WELCOME!

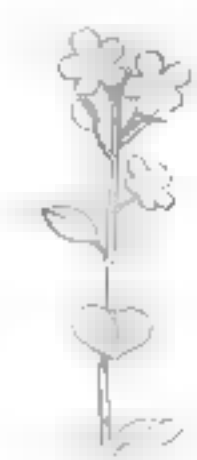
旬の味





FAVORITE CROQUETTES





**A SIDE
CHARACTER'S
LOVE STORY**
Akane Tamura

CHAPTER 4



IRIE-KUN IS
MY COWORKER
AT MY PART-
TIME JOB.



...SO
I'VE NEVER
REVEALED...



I DON'T
WANT TO
TROUBLE
HIM...

...THAT I
HAVE FEELINGS
FOR HIM.

SO WHY IS THIS
HAPPENING NOW...?



TANAKA-SAN,
WHAT DO YOU THINK
ABOUT IRIE-SAN?



WHAT DO
I THINK...?

W...

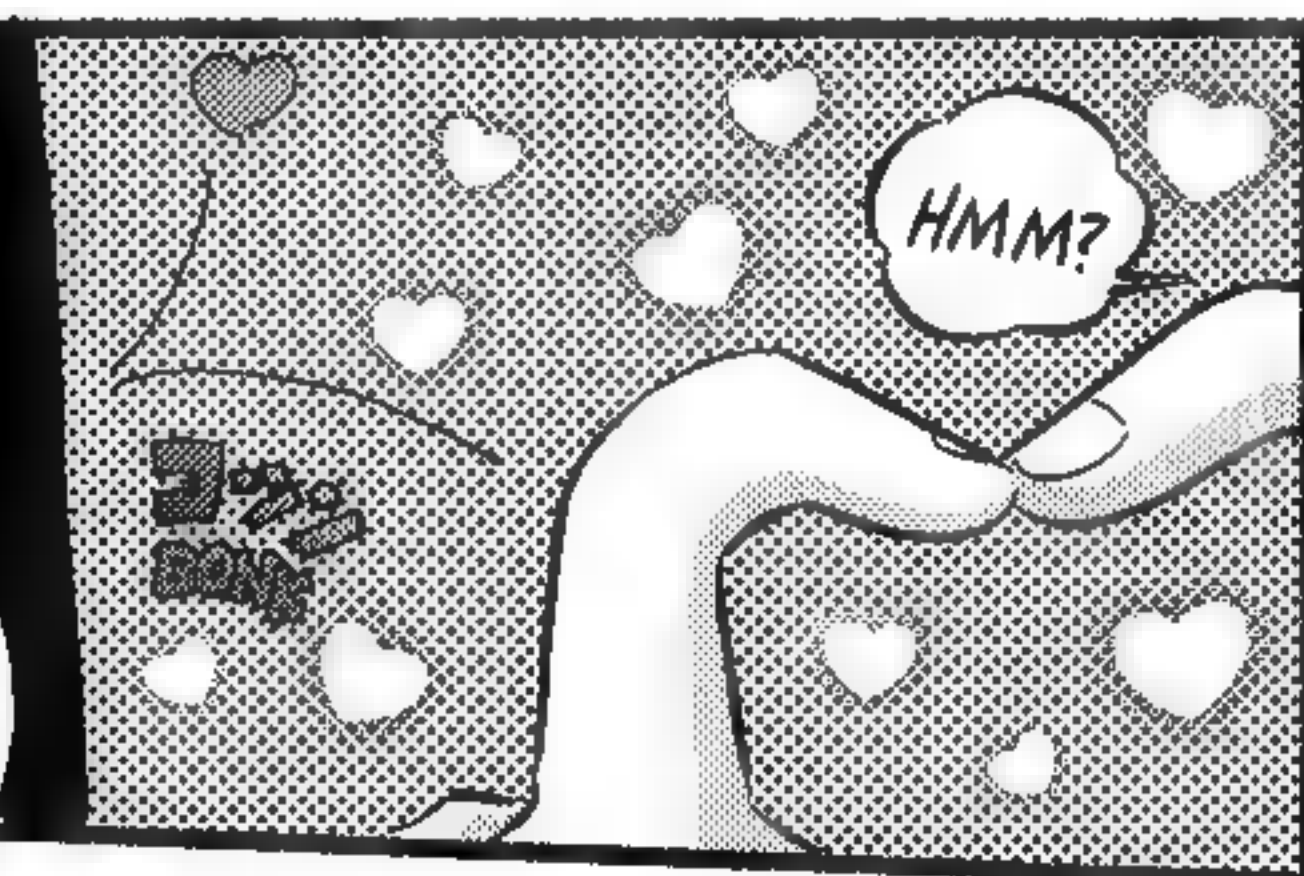
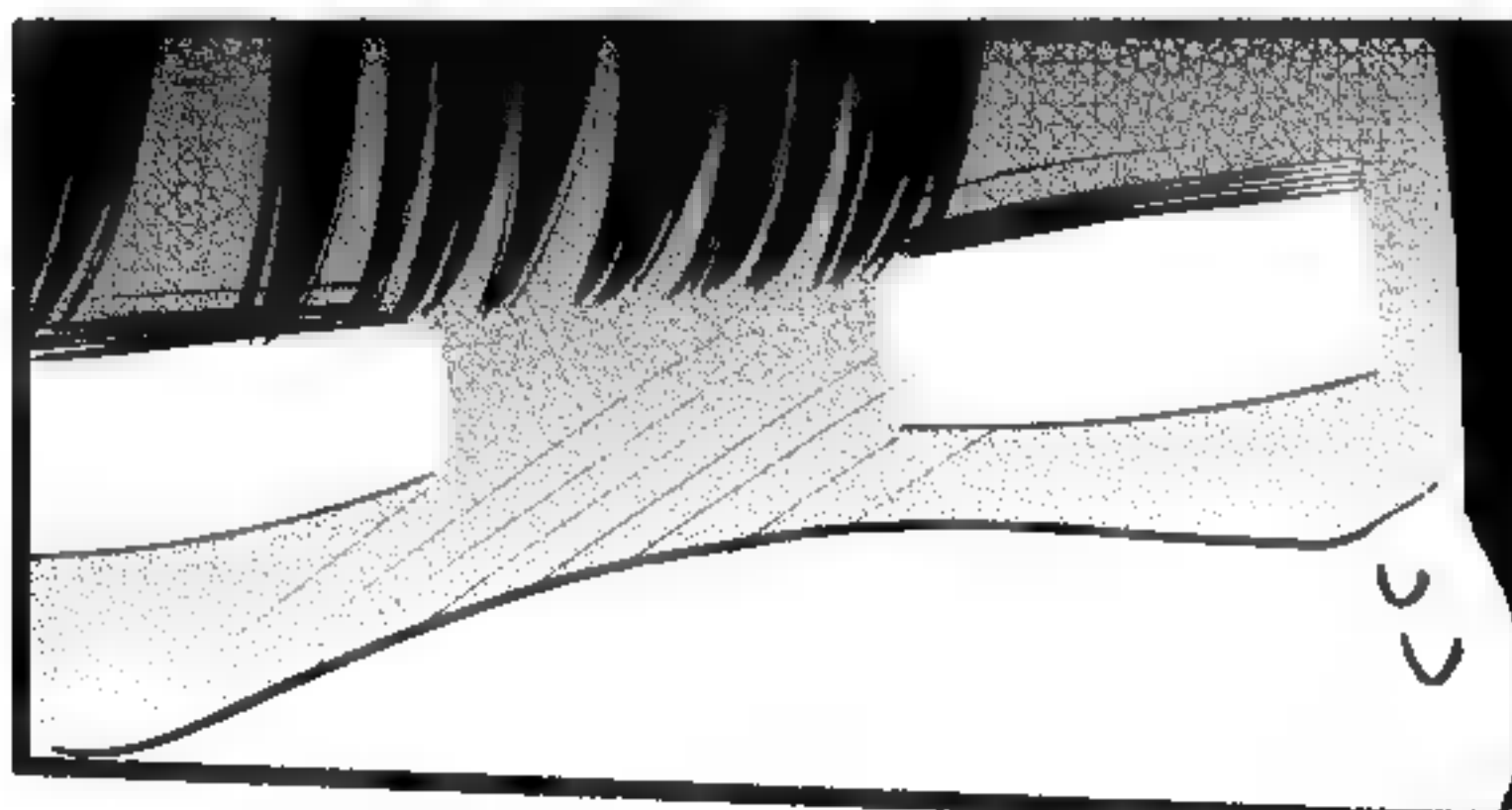


REEEE-
ALLY?



WE'RE CO-
WORKERS...

I DON'T
REALLY GET
WHAT SHE
MEANS,
HERE...



HMM?



MOBUKO'S QUIRKS:
SHE'S LIVED HER LIFE
AVOIDING THE TOPIC OF
ROMANCE, SO SHE HAS ZERO
ABILITY TO DEAL WITH
OR DISCUSS IT.

**I... I HAVE TO
FUDGE MY WAY
OUT OF THIS!**

I'VE FIGURED
IT OUT, Y'KNOW!
TANAKA-SAN, YOU'VE
HAD YOUR EYE ON IRIE-
SAN THIS WHOLE TIME,
HAVEN'T YOU?

!!



SO, HOW
LONG HAVE
YOU...

THAT'S NOT IT.

LOOK,
I'VE BEEN
WATCHING YOU
ALL DAY.

I DON'T
WANT MY
FEELINGS...

...TO BE
A BURDEN
ON HIM.

IT...

IT'S JUST THAT...



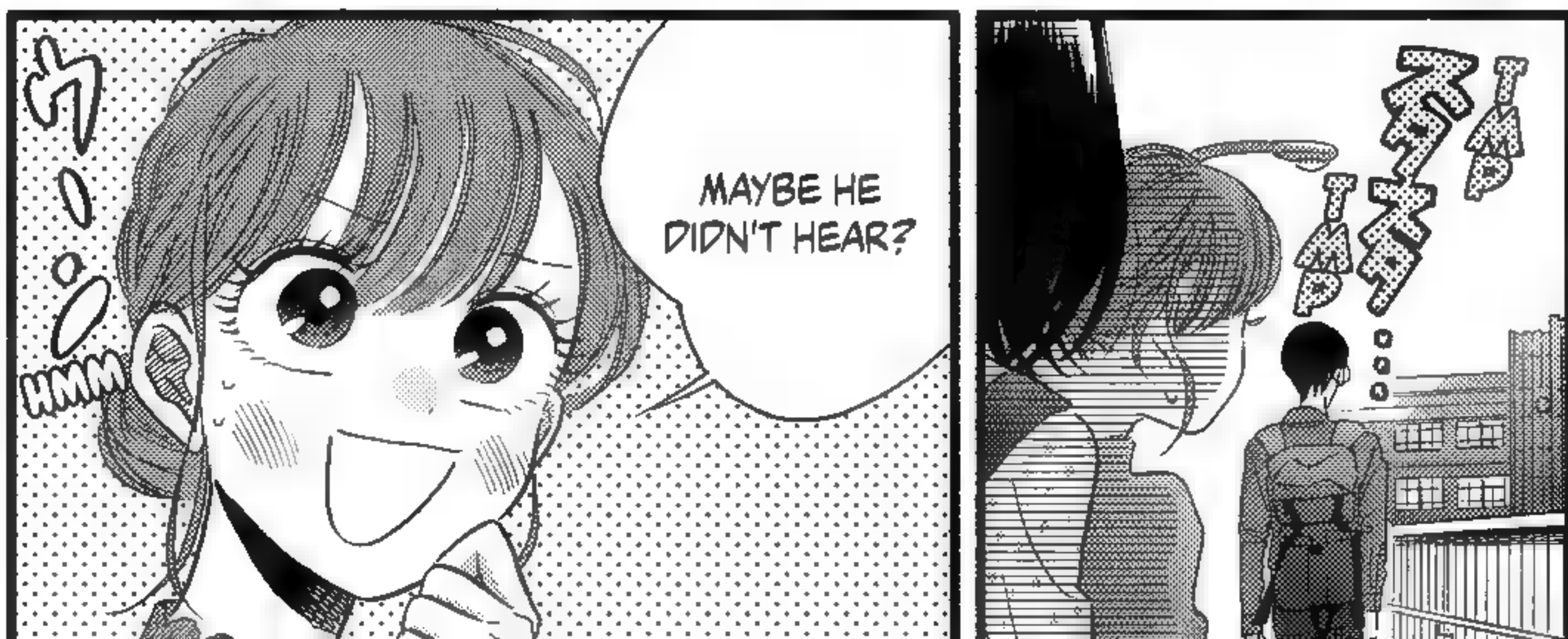
IRIE-KUN IS...

...HARD
FOR ME TO
DEAL WITH...

OHNNNN-
NNNNN~

HOHO...

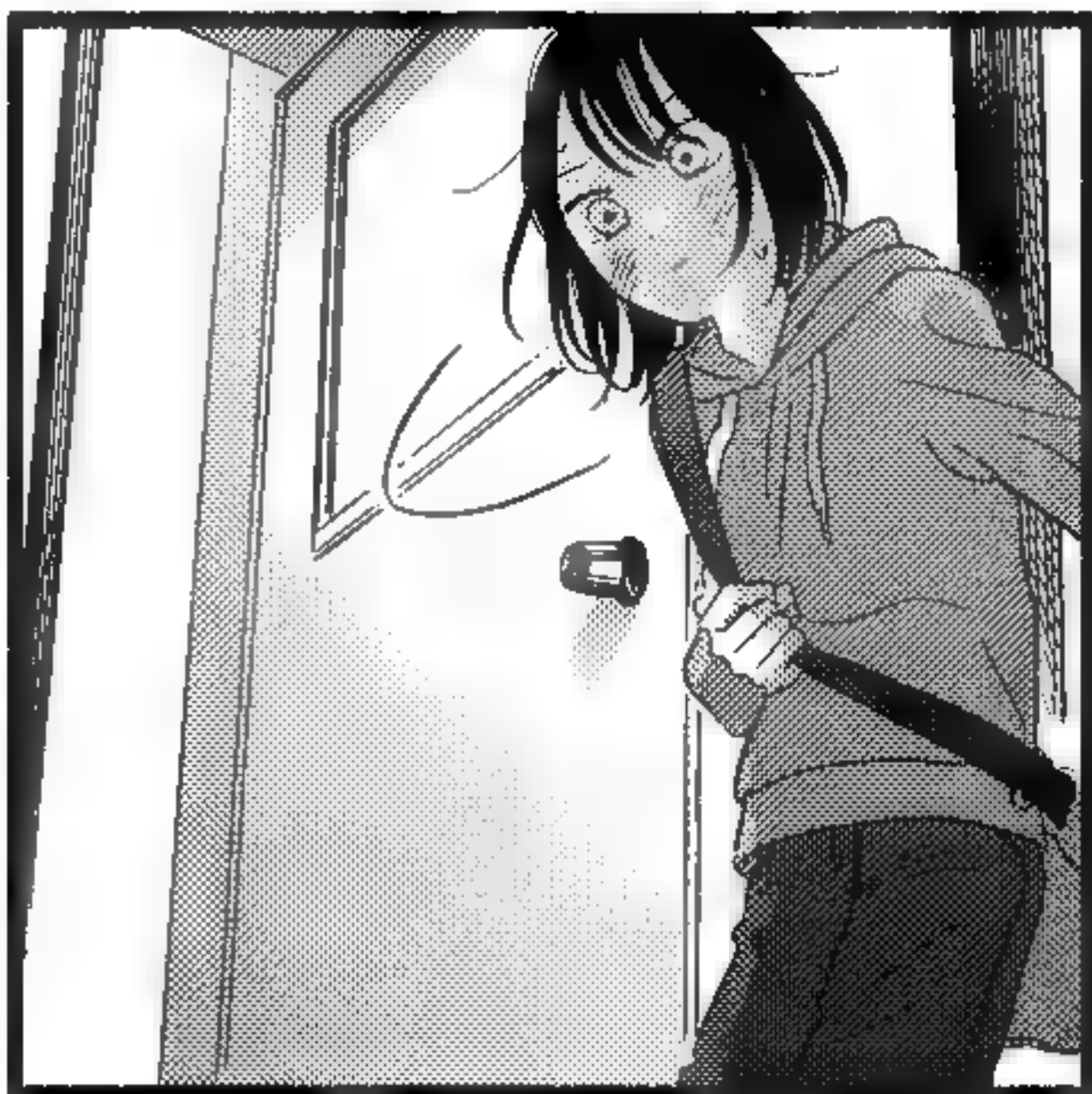
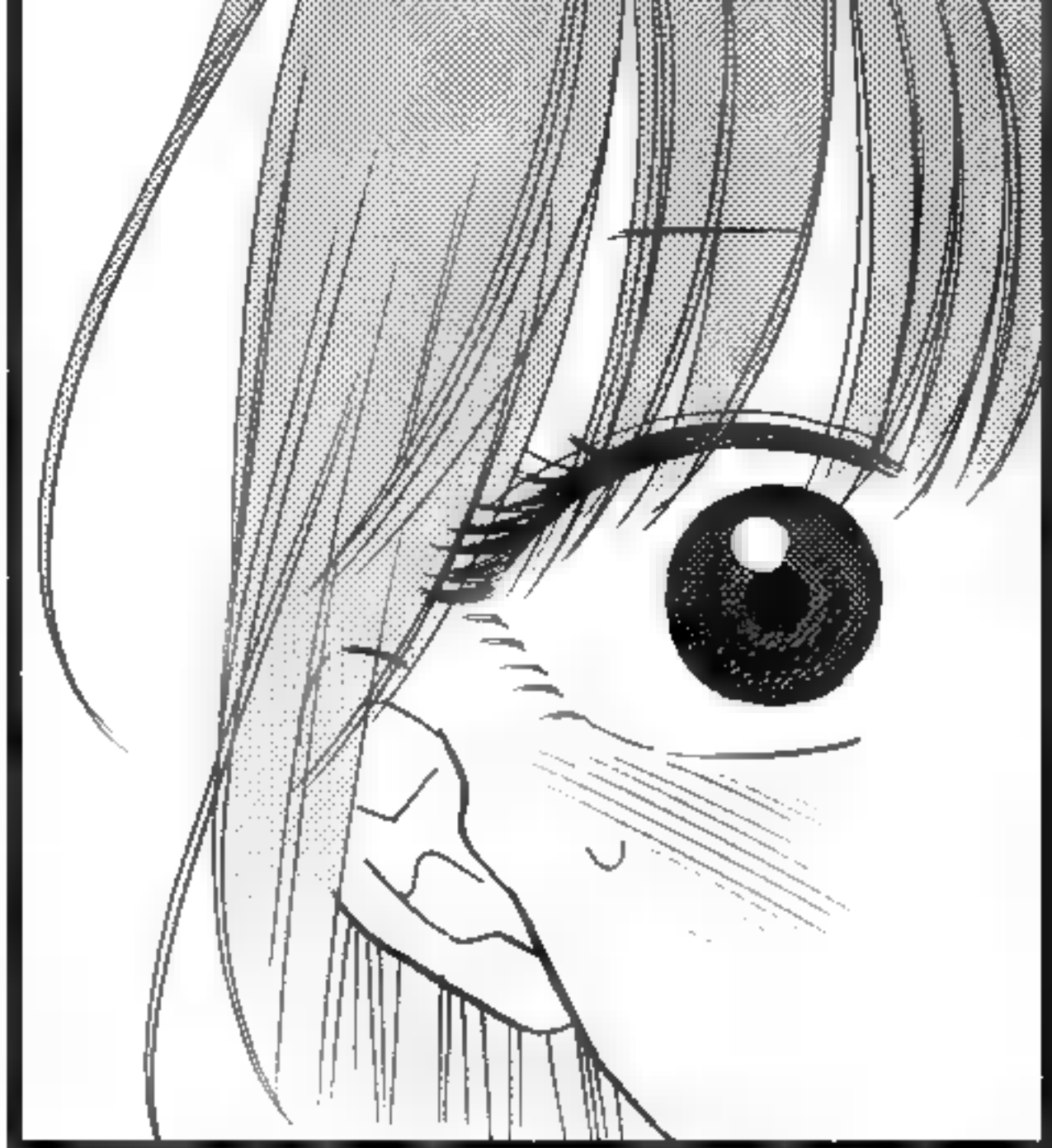






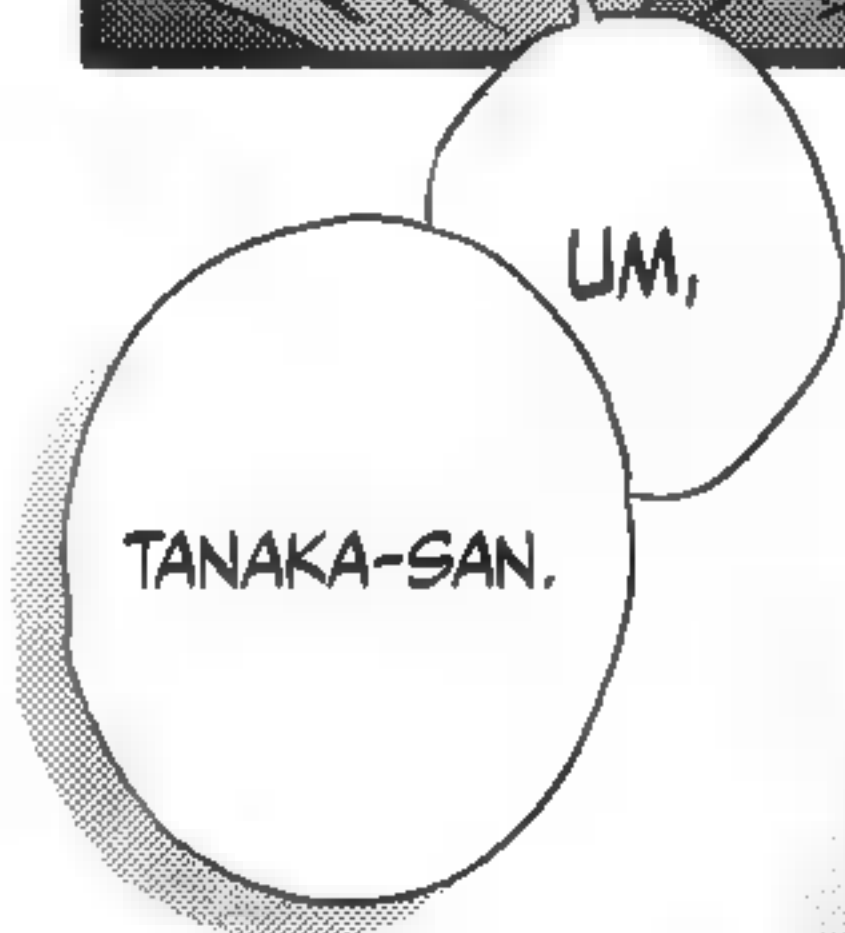






"IRIE-KUN
IS HARD FOR
ME TO DEAL
WITH..."







LET'S DO
OUR BEST.



THE TWO
OF US ARE HERE
UNTIL CLOSING
TODAY.



R...

RIGHT.

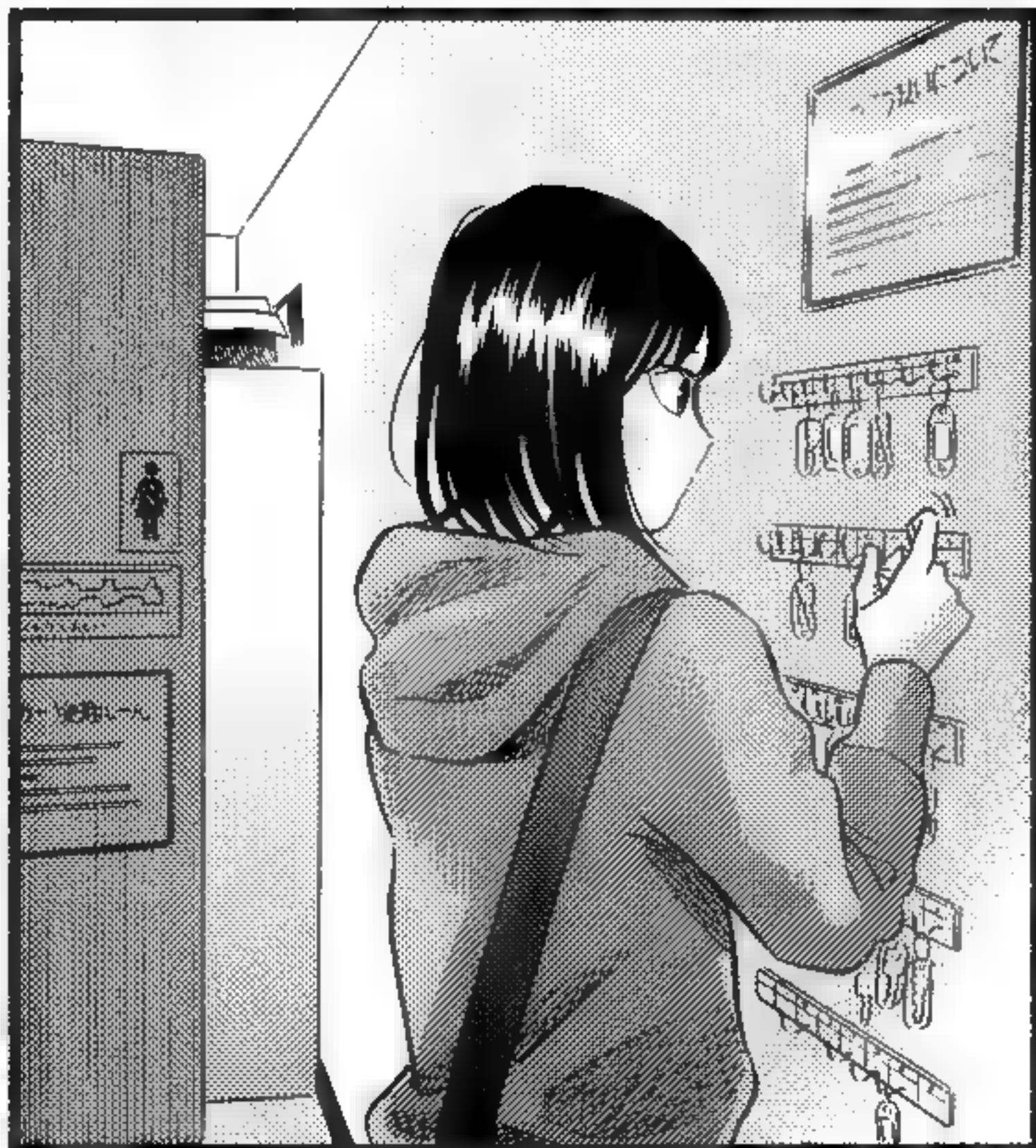


LET'S
WORK HARD.

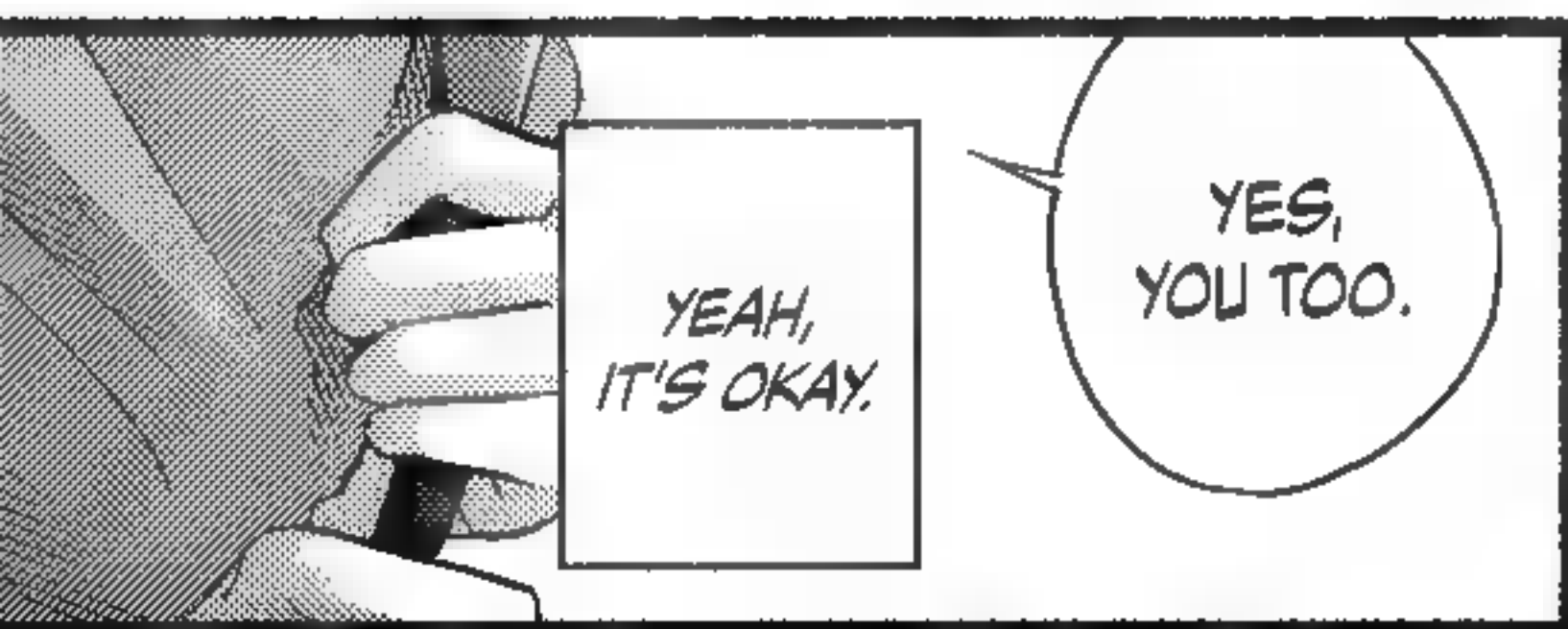
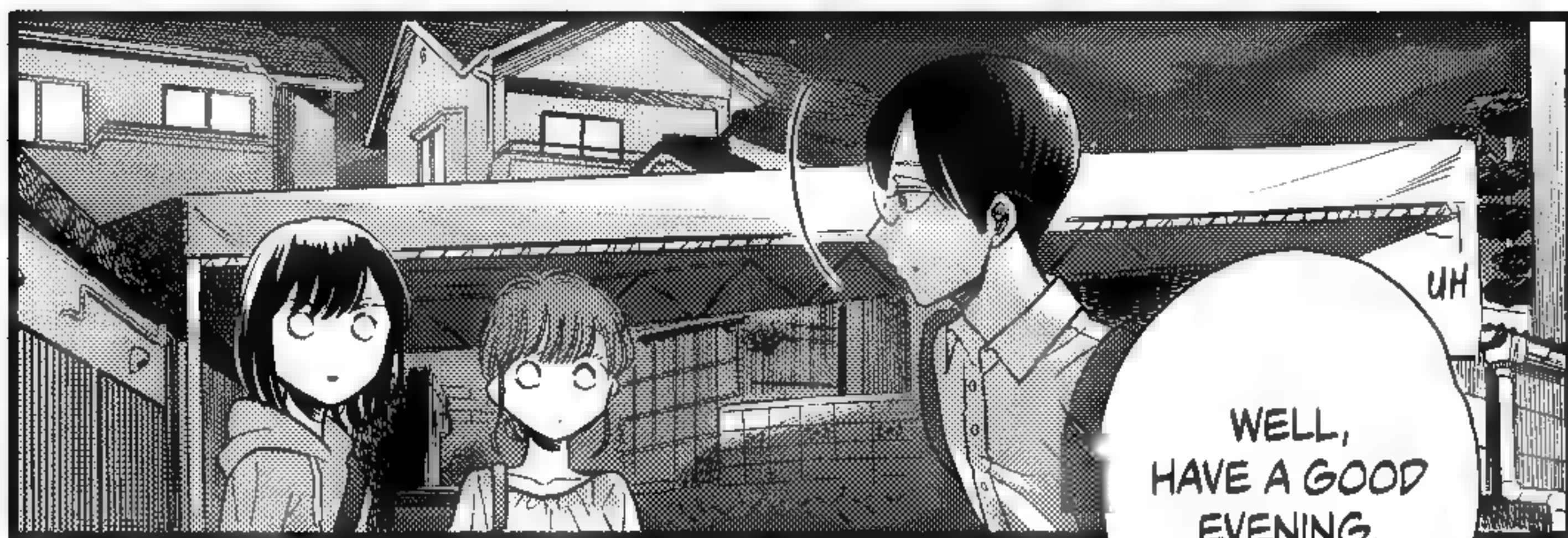


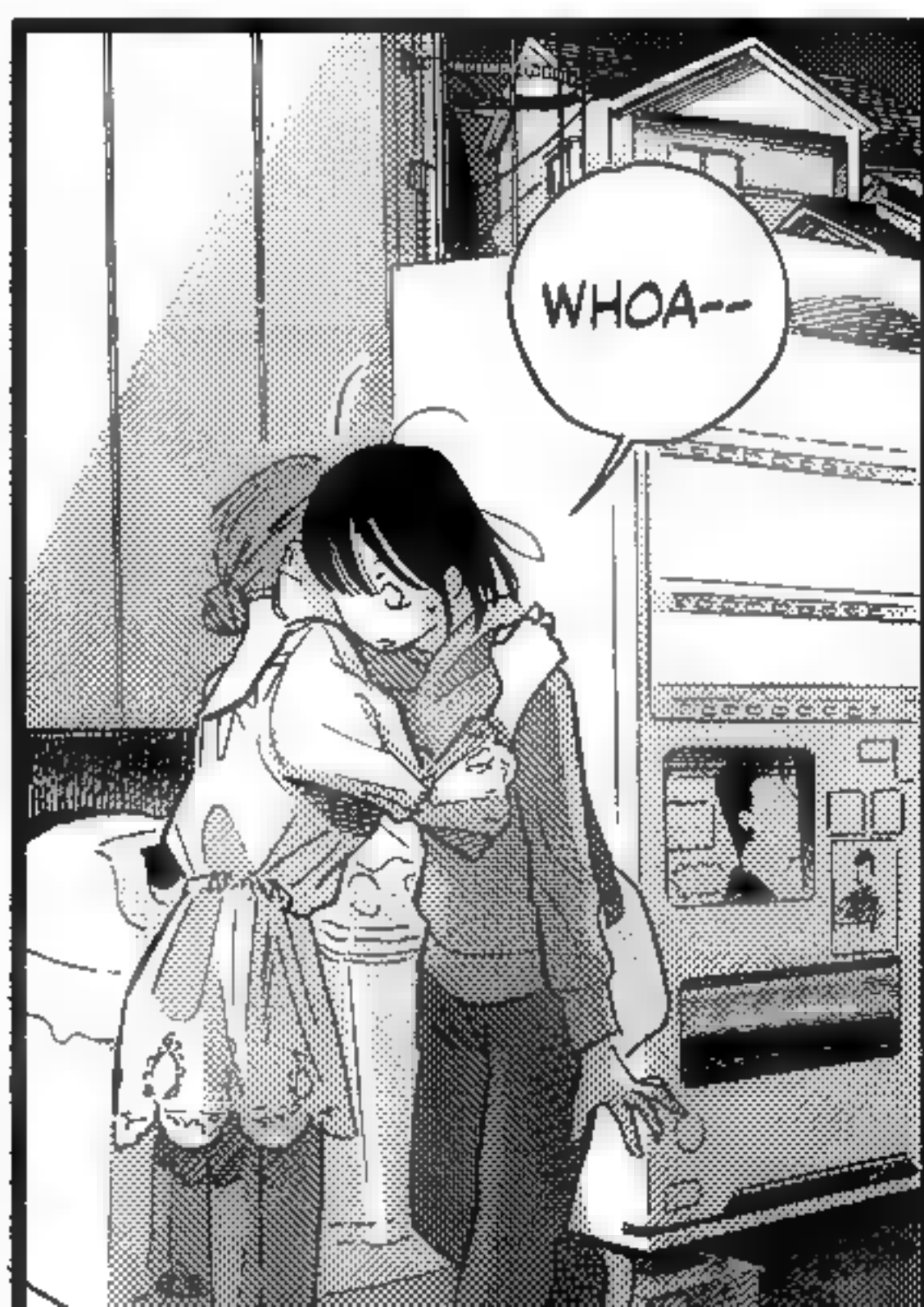
HEY
THERE
IRIE-SAN,
TANAKA-
SAN!

OH!











HUH?



YOU
NEED TO TALK
THINGS OUT WITH
IRIE-SAN.



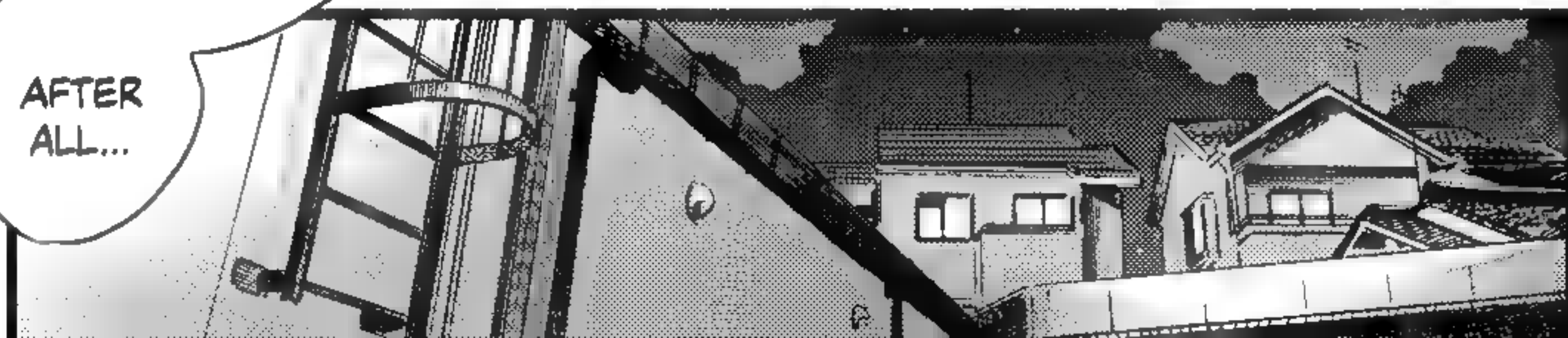
HUH?! NO,
UM, THAT
WAS...

LOOK, I GET IT.
YOU BLURTED
THAT OUT AND
NOW YOU'RE
BACKED INTO
A CORNER.

IT'S TOTALLY
MY FAULT,
I'M SORRY.

BUT THAT'S
EXACTLY WHY
YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE
RESPONSIBILITY!
FIX YOUR MISTAKE,
AND HEAL THOSE
WOUNDS!

AFTER
ALL...



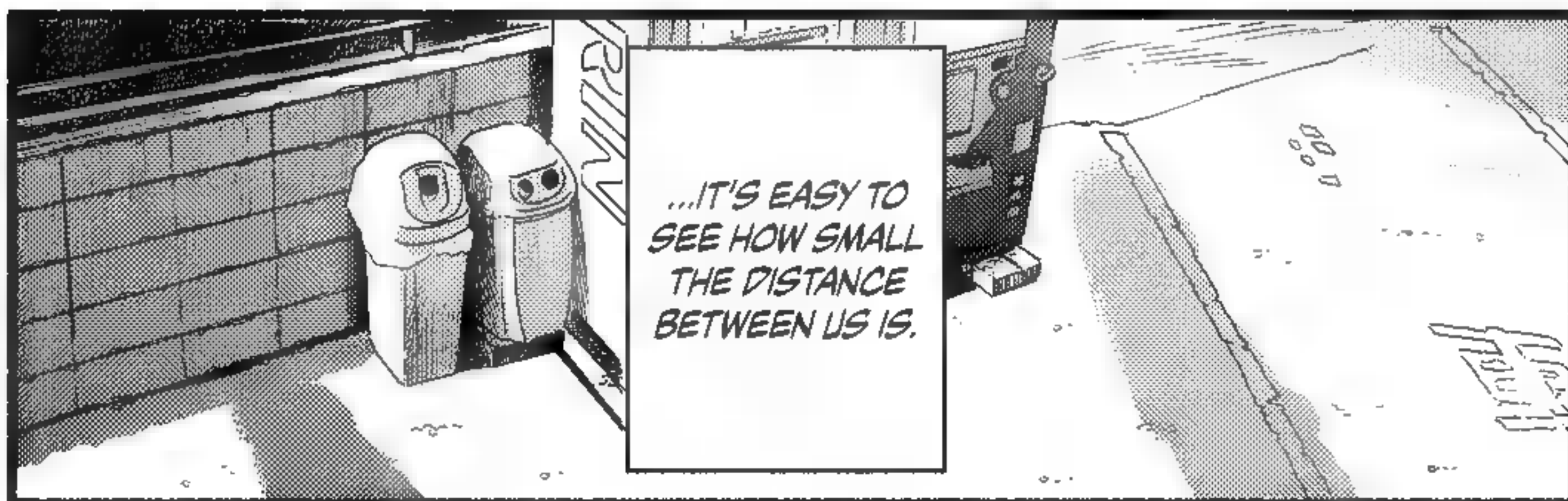




IF I'M BEING
ATTENTIVE...



UH... SORRY
ABOUT THIS.



...IT'S EASY TO
SEE HOW SMALL
THE DISTANCE
BETWEEN US IS.



IT'S FINE
IF YOU DON'T
WANT TO GO...



SO... WHAT
DO YOU THINK?

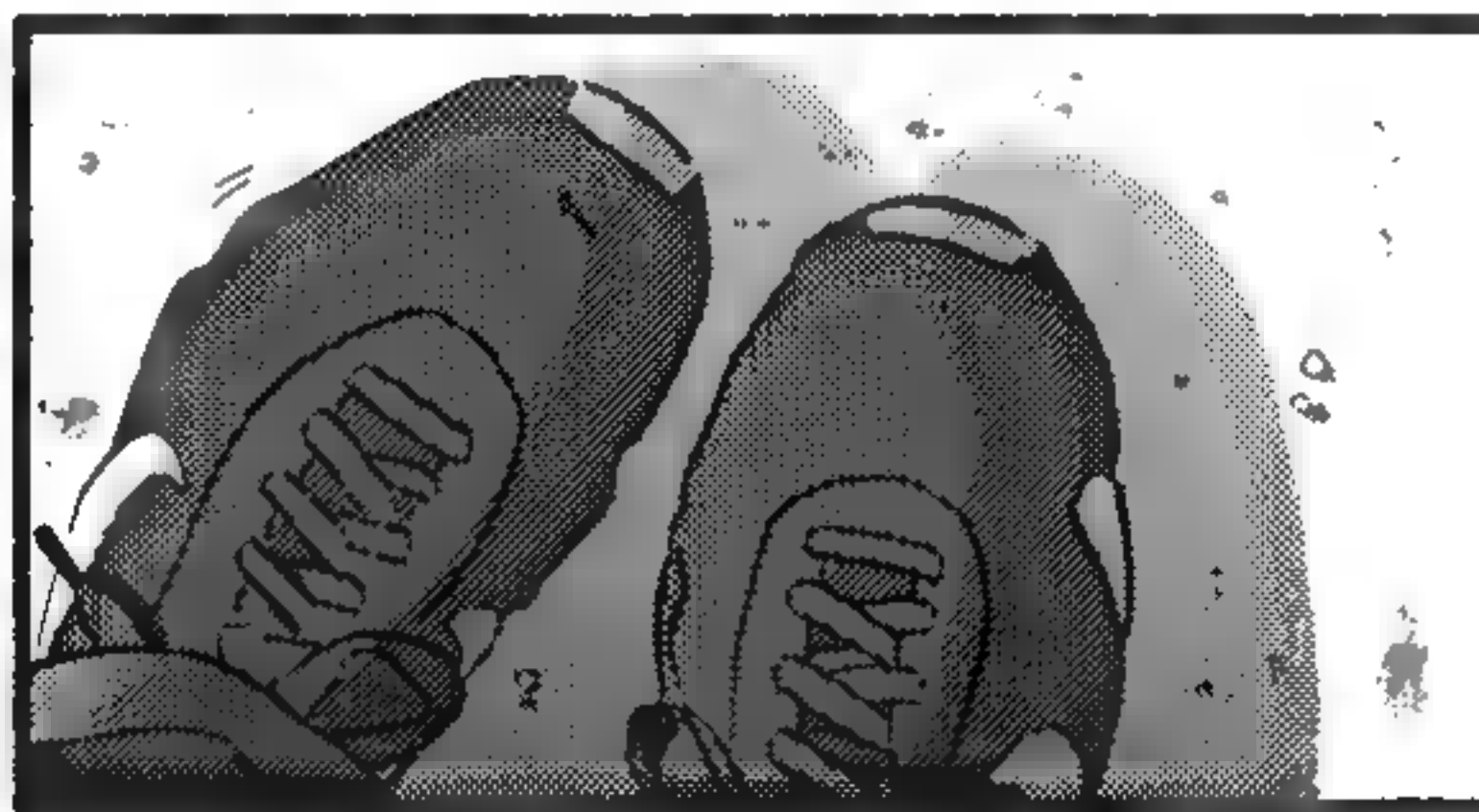
IRIE-KUN
WAS KIND
ENOUGH TO
FORGIVE ME...



...SO TODAY
HAS BEEN
JUST LIKE
ALWAYS.



LET'S GO.



L...





I'VE BEEN
TAKING THE
EASY WAY
OUT.



...WHAT I
SAID THE
OTHER DAY.



OR THAT HE
DIDN'T CARE
ABOUT...



HOPING
HE DIDN'T
HEAR,



IT'S JUST
AN EXCUSE
TO AVOID
APOLOGIZING.



UH, UM...



I...



UM...





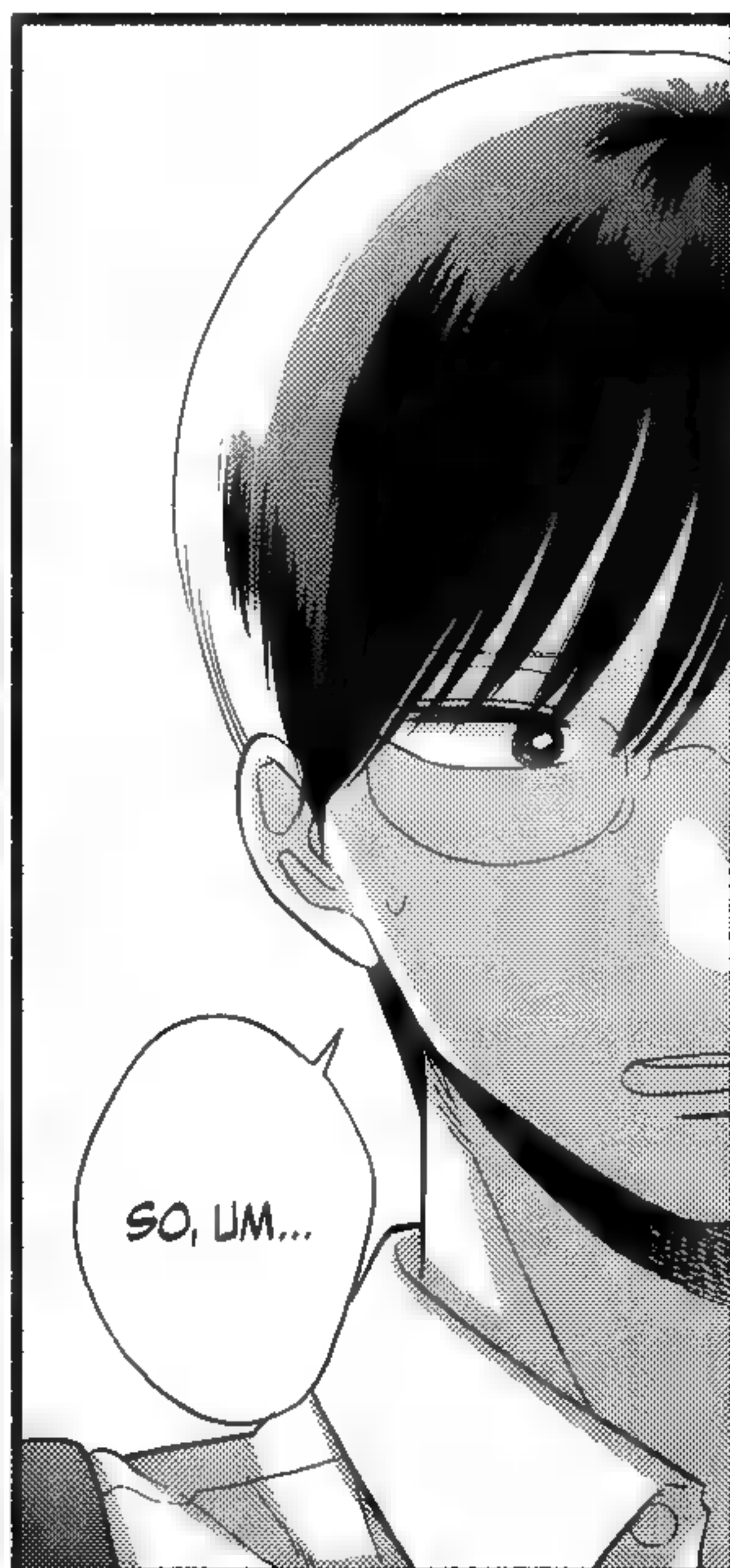
ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT?



I...

IRIE-KUN...







I...



I'VE NEVER
THOUGHT YOU
WERE OFF-
PUTTING.

YOU'RE ALWAYS
SO KIND TO ME,
AND, UM...

AND YOU'RE
NOT GLOOMY
AT ALL. I'VE
ALWAYS
THOUGHT OF
YOU AS CALM
AND COM-
POSED.



THAT'S NOT
TRUE AT ALL!





YOU EXPLAINED
EVERYTHING JUST
FINE.

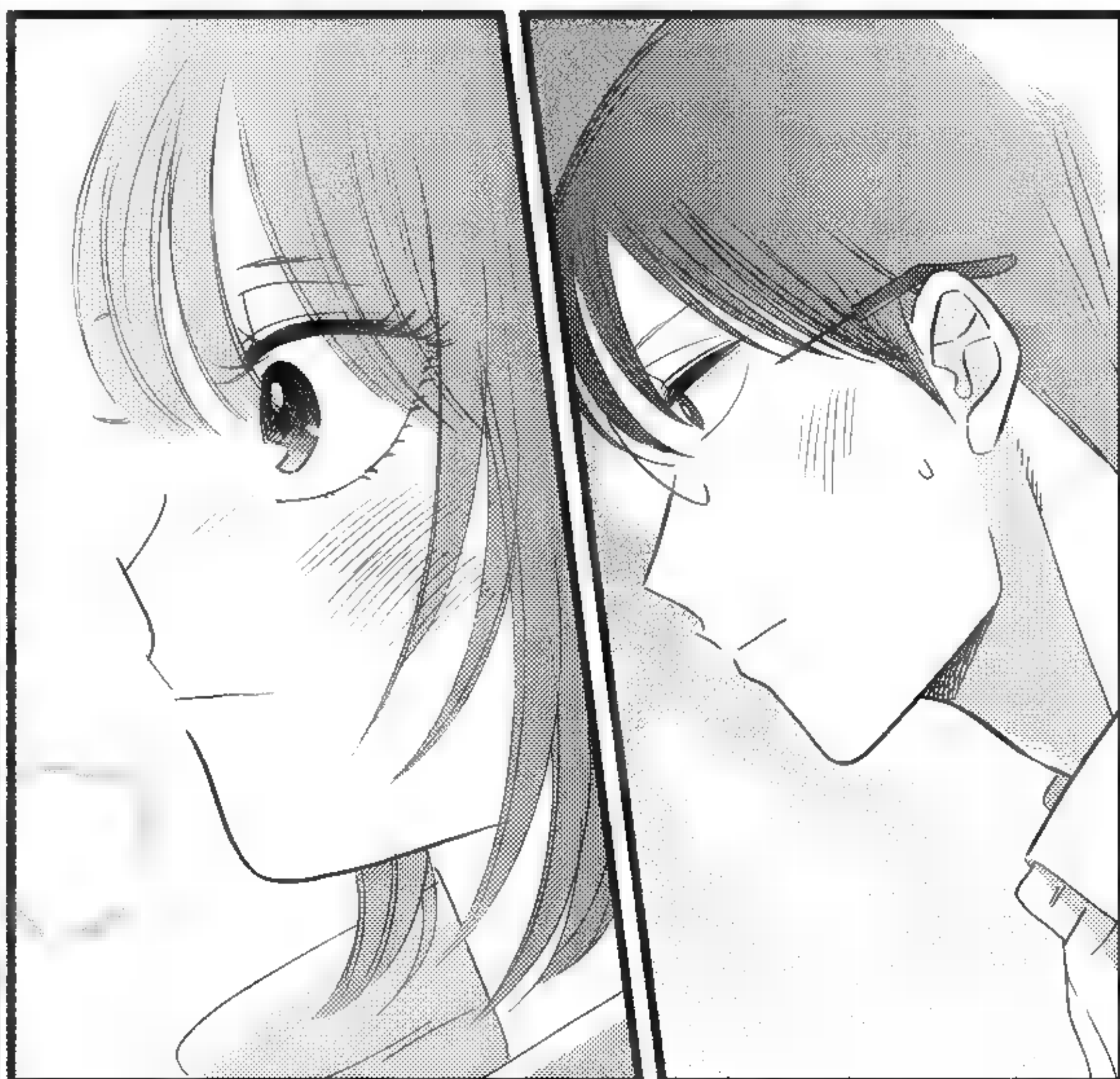


IT'S OKAY.



WELL, SHALL WE
GET MOVING?







WHAT EVERYONE ORDERED AT THE BEEF BOWL PLACE





**A SIDE
CHARACTER'S
LOVE STORY**
Akane Tamura





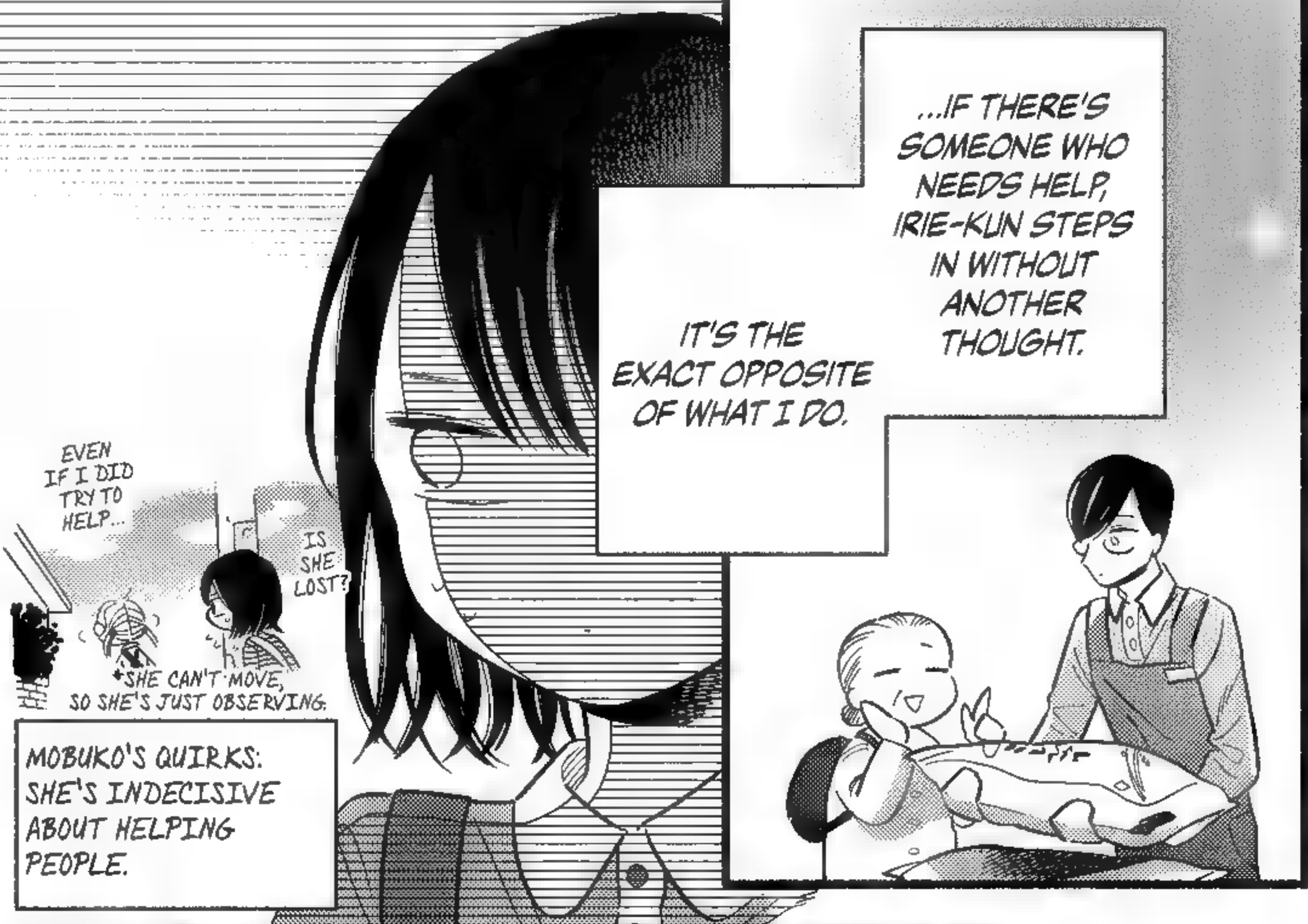
VEGETABLES

WHUP.

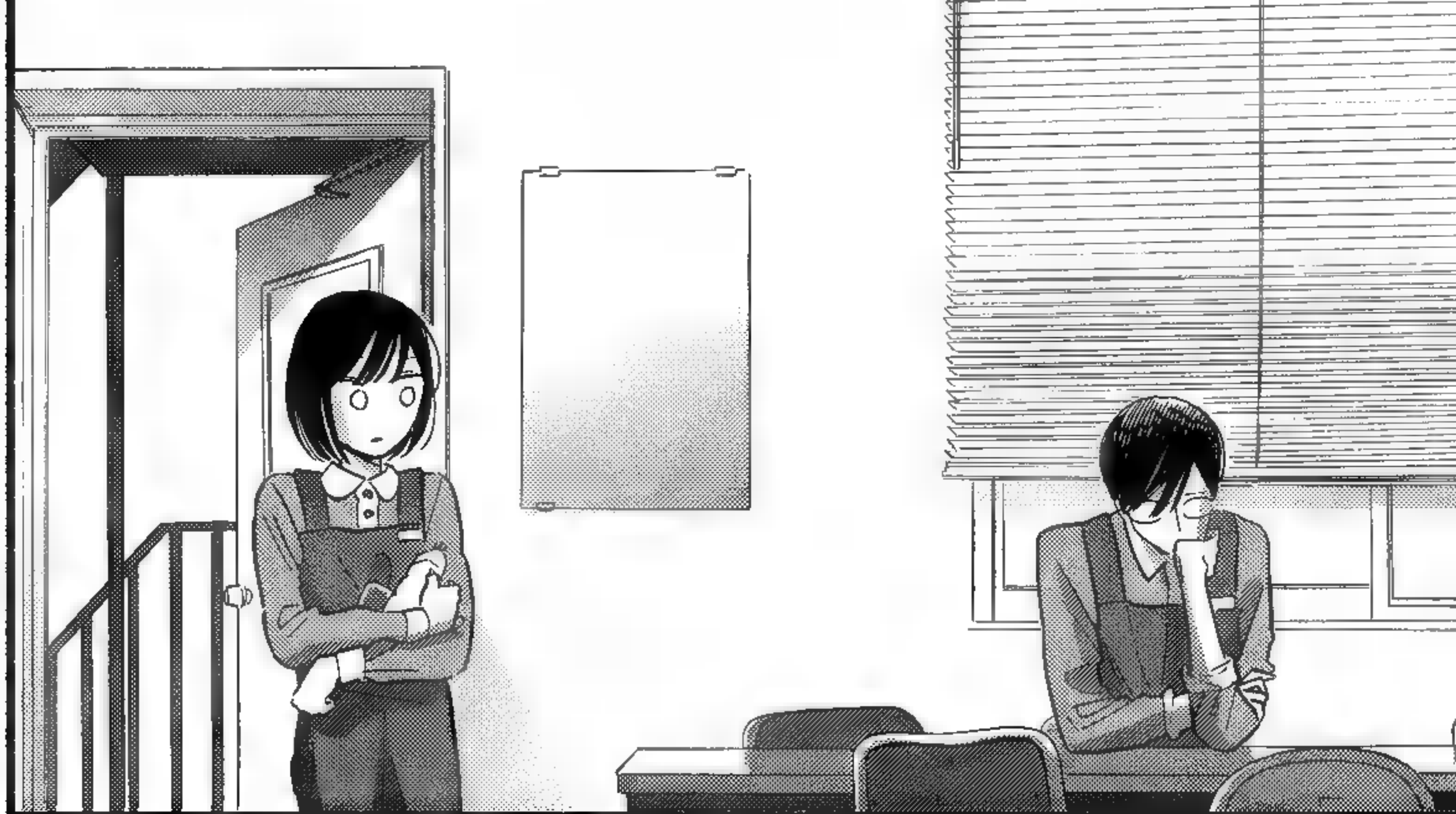
BLES

FRESH

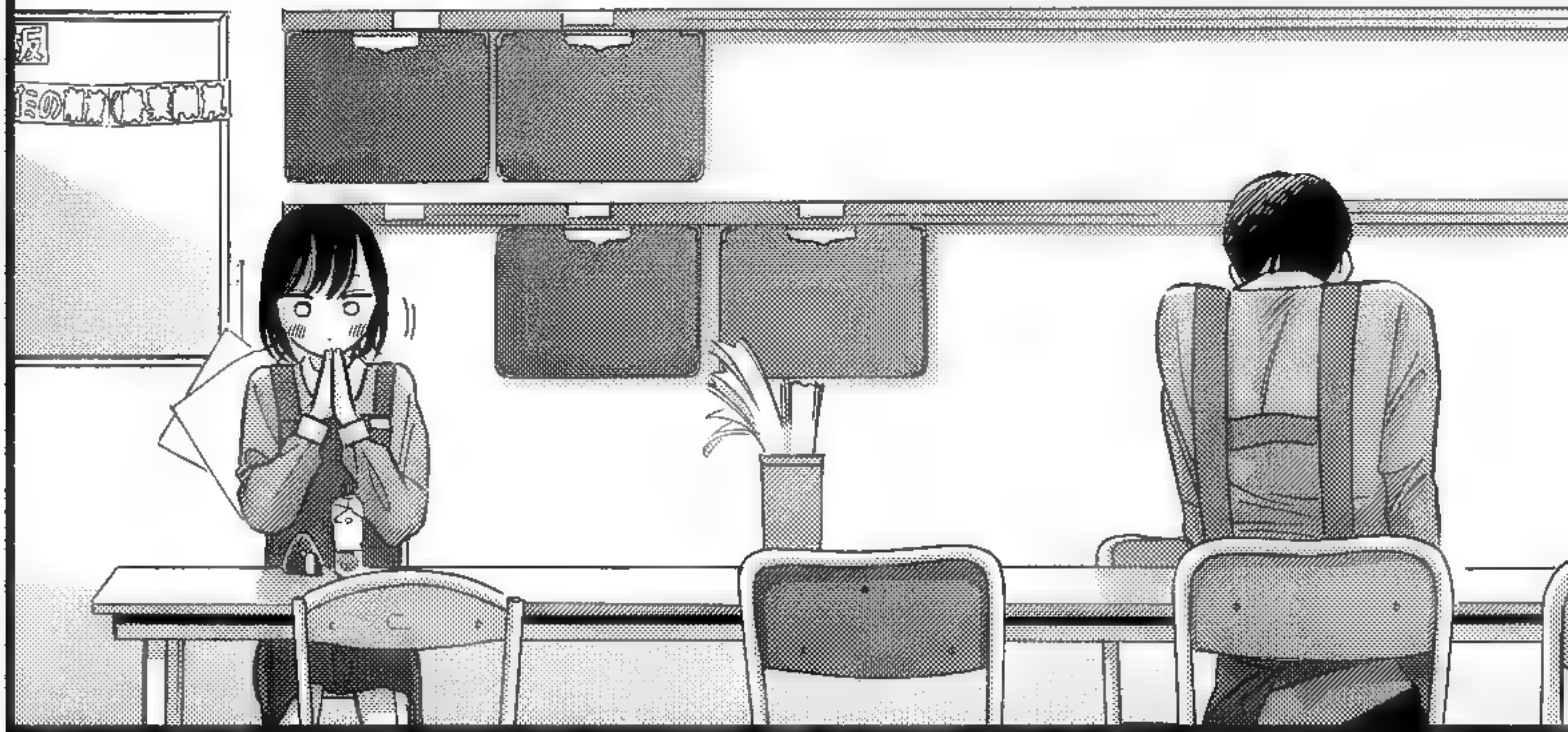












IRIE-KUN'S
ALWAYS SO
RESPONSIBLE
AND COMPOSED...

...AND
HERE HE IS,
NAPPING.



THIS IS A
NEW ONE...

BA-BMP

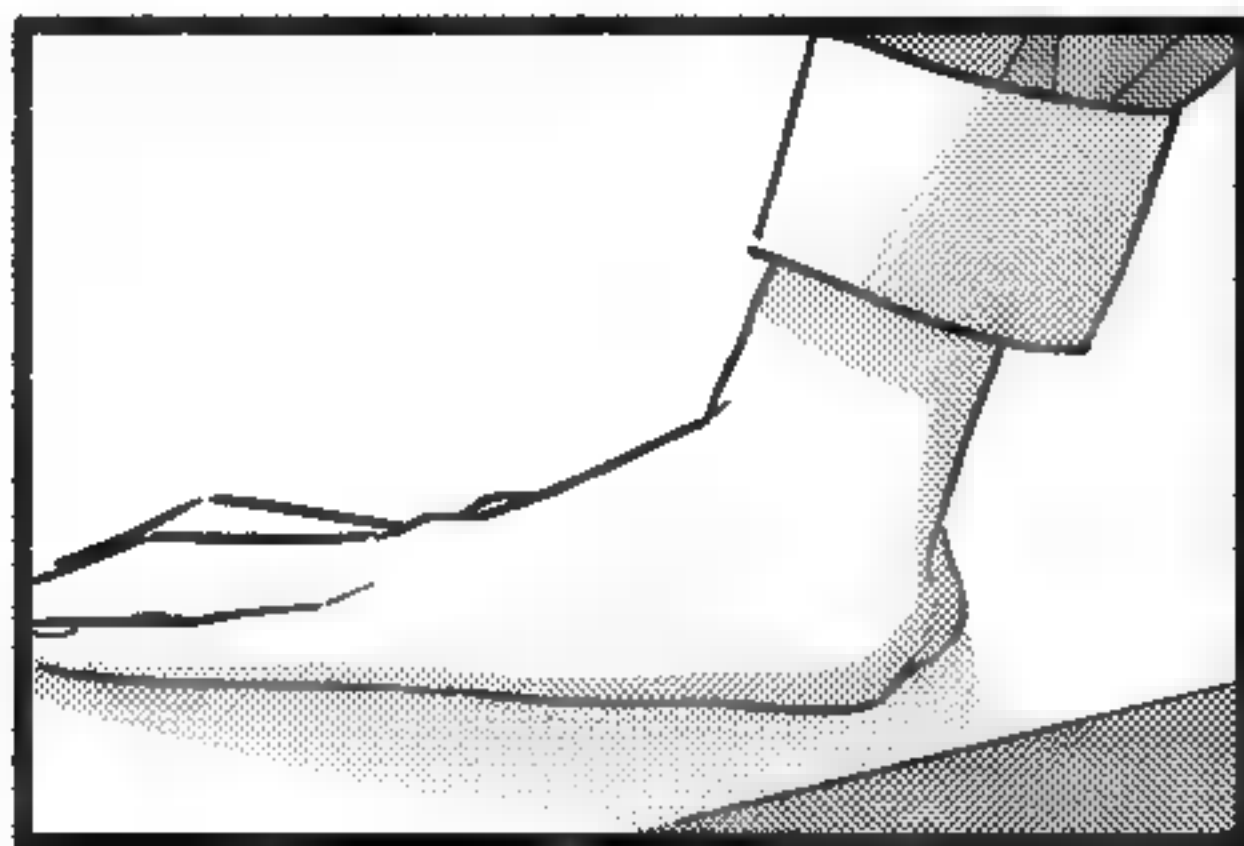
BA-BMP

FEEL

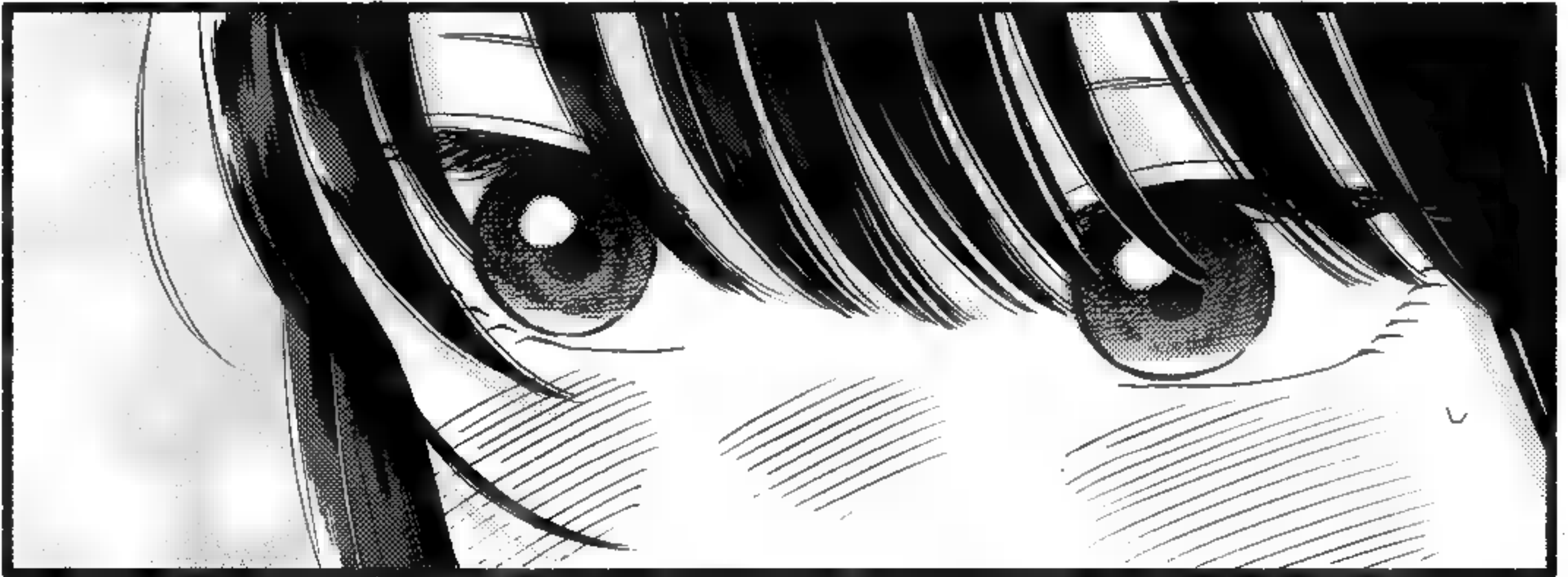
そよ

CAREFULLY

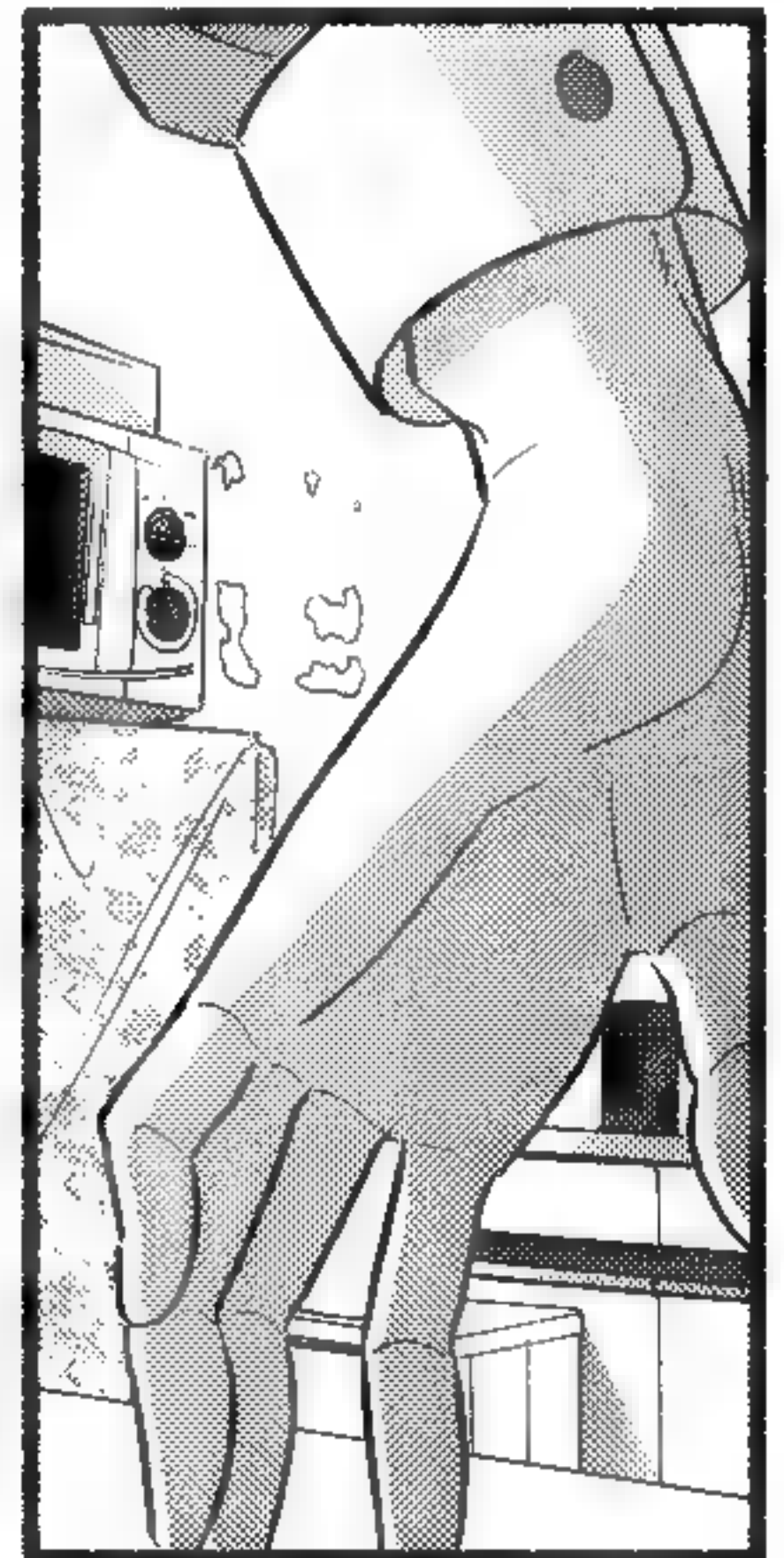


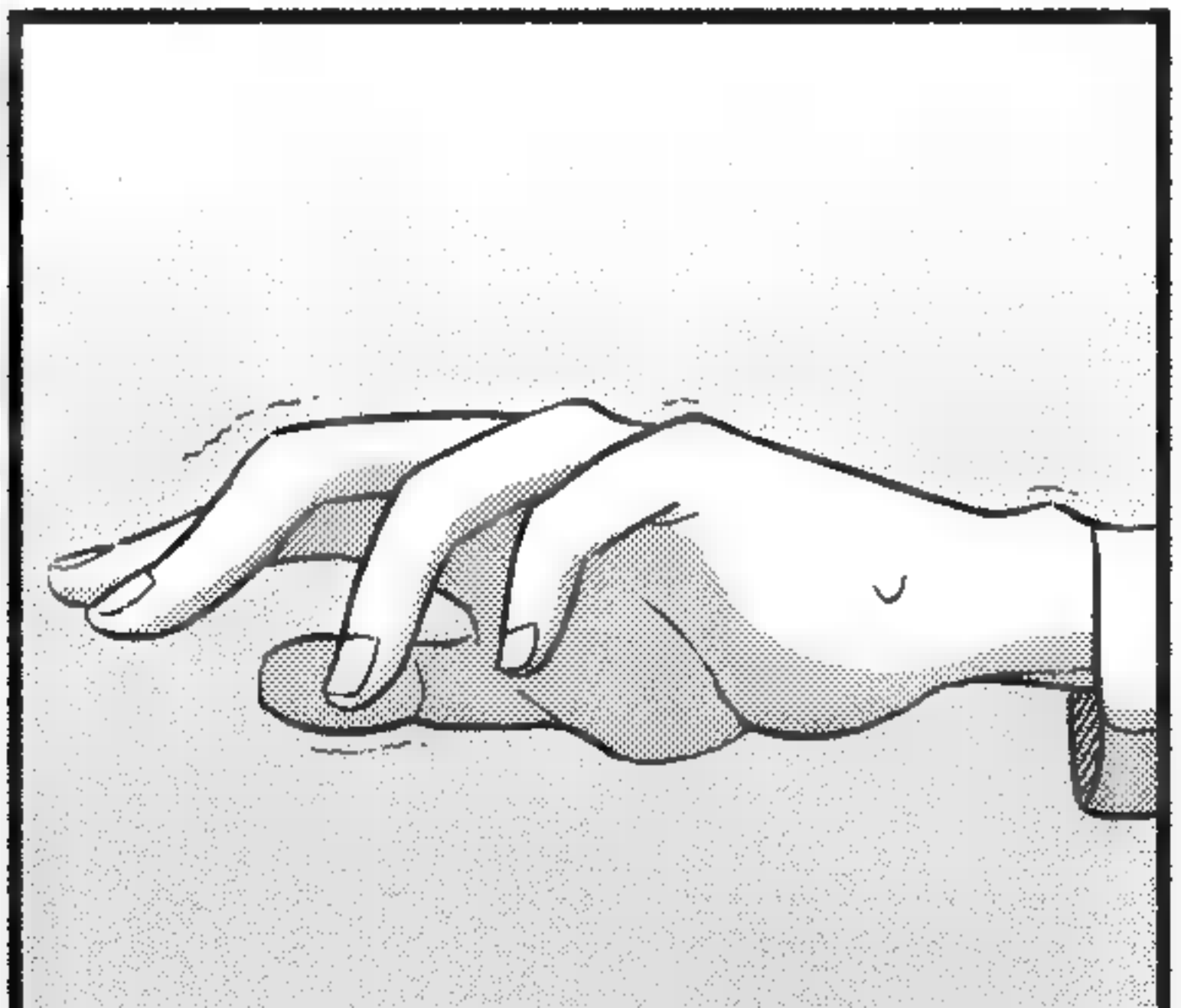


IF IRIE-KUN
WAS IN MY
POSITION...

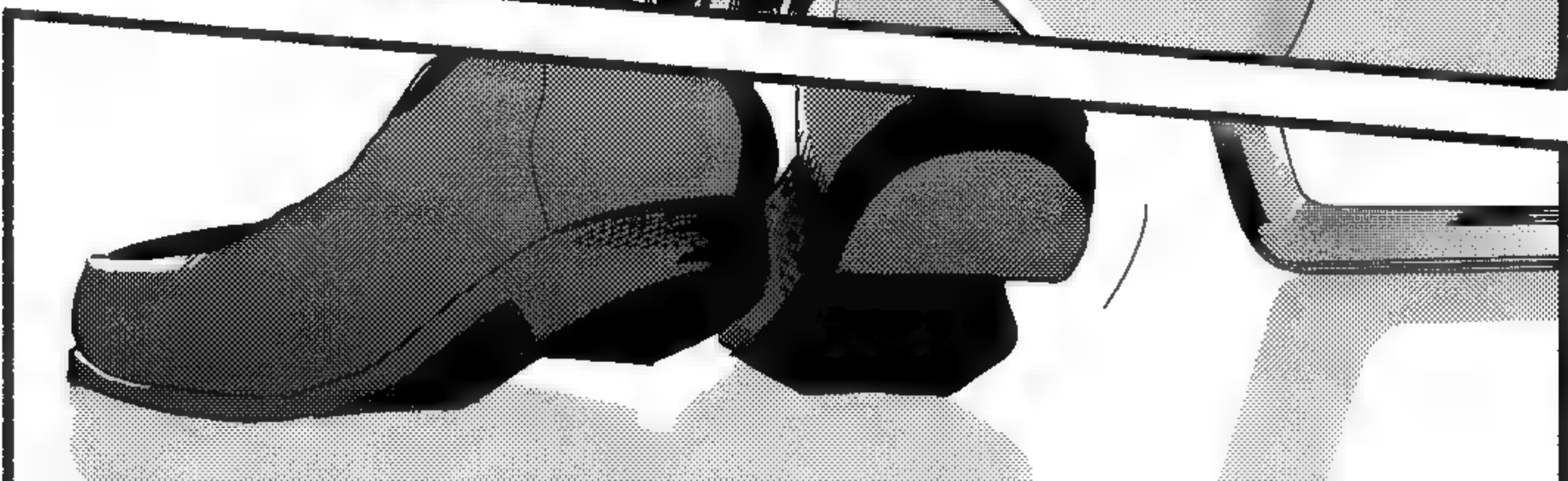
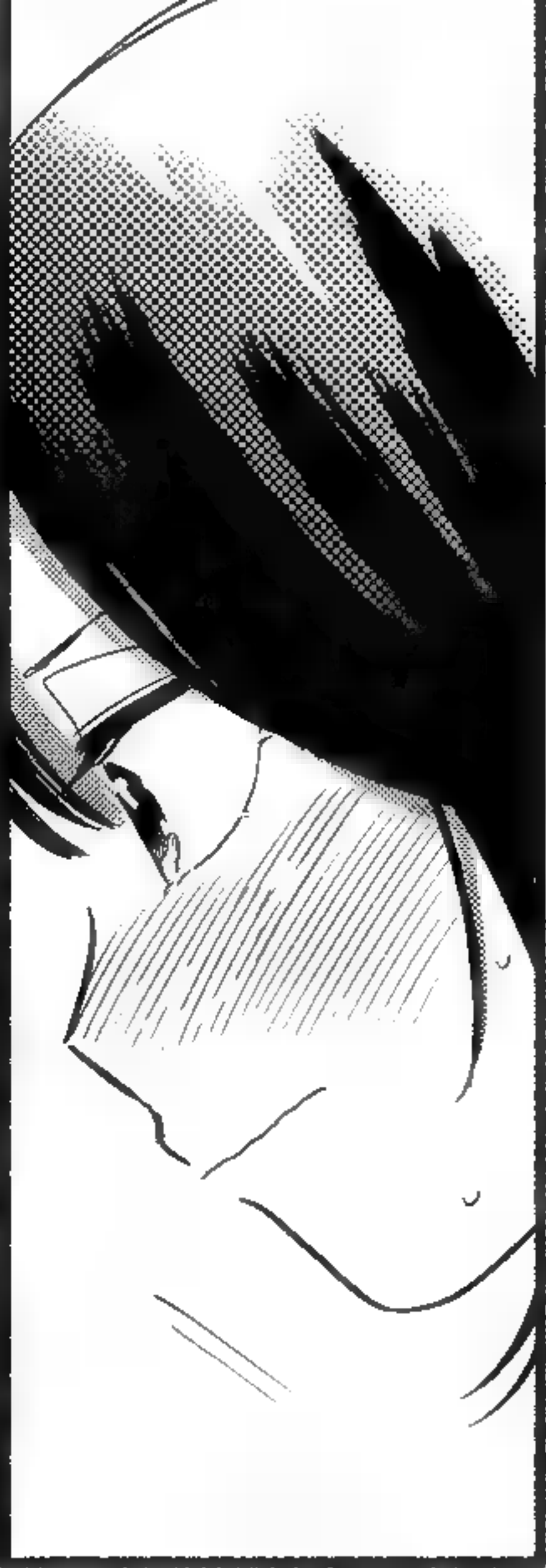


...I'M
SURE...



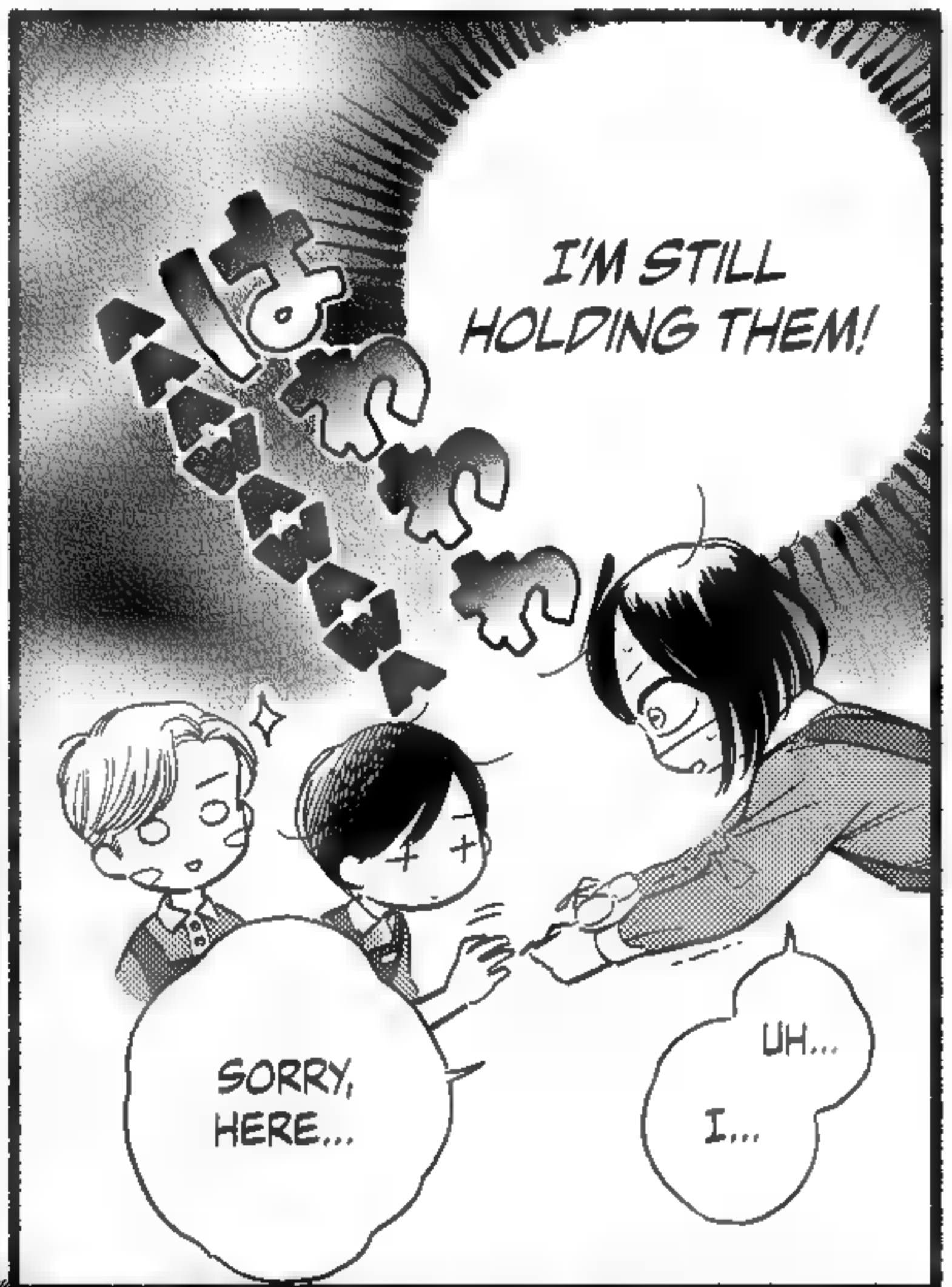


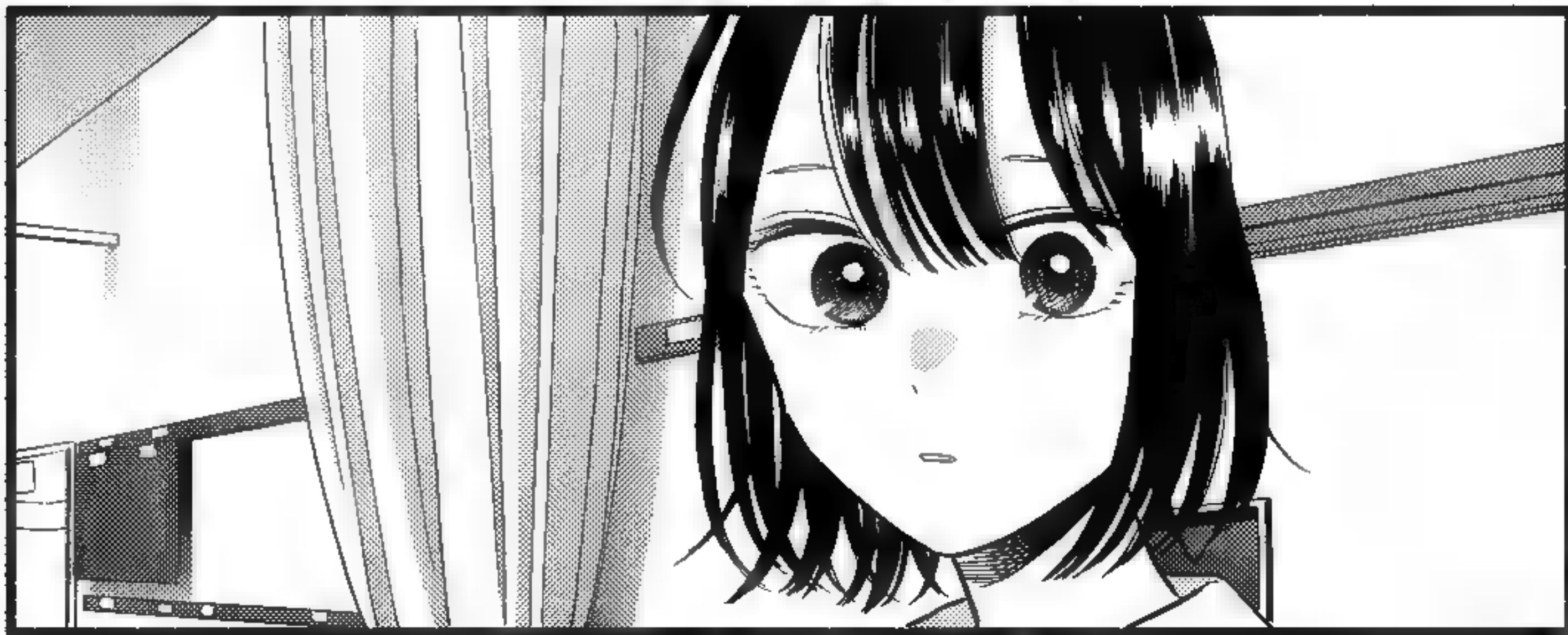


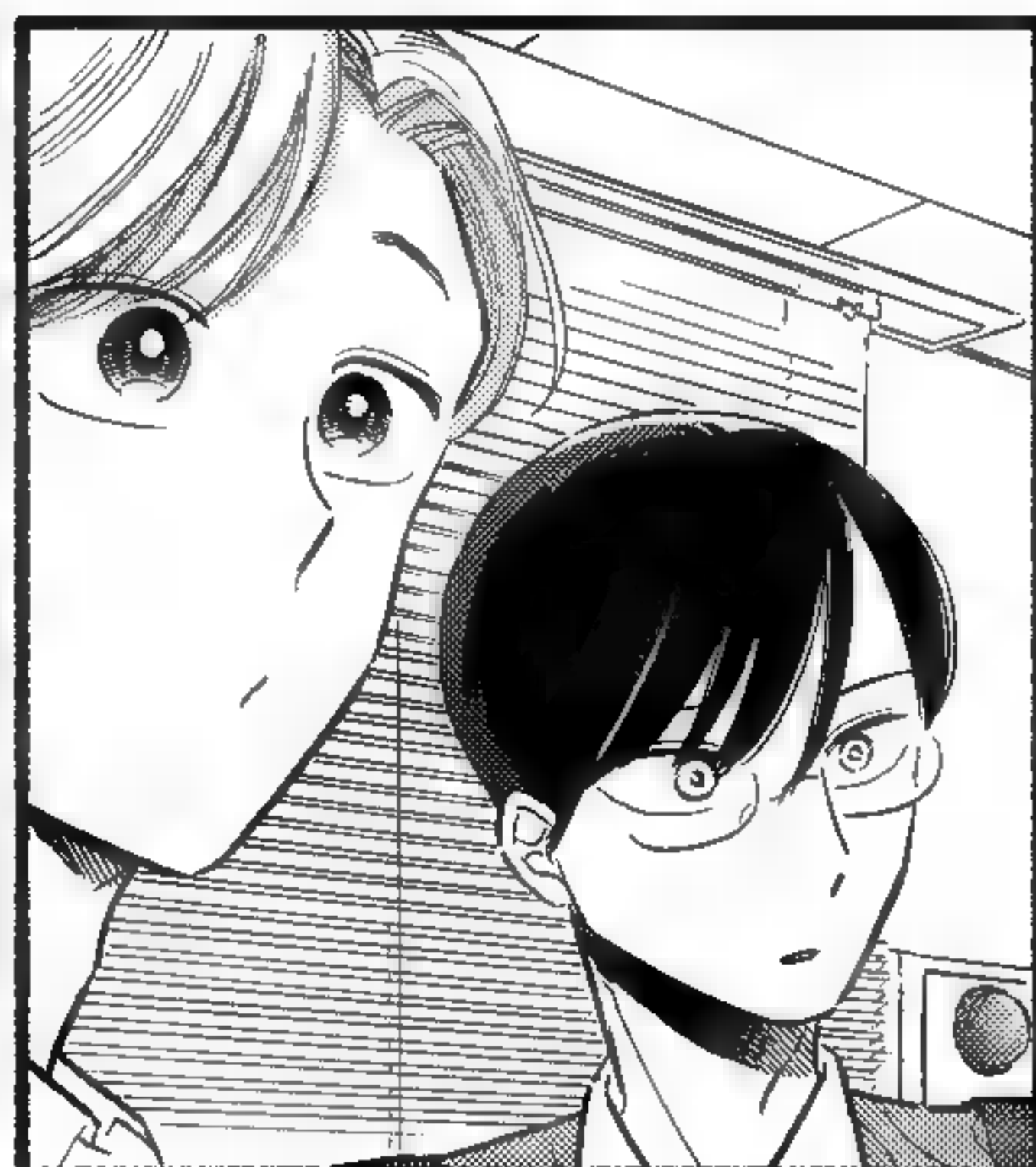














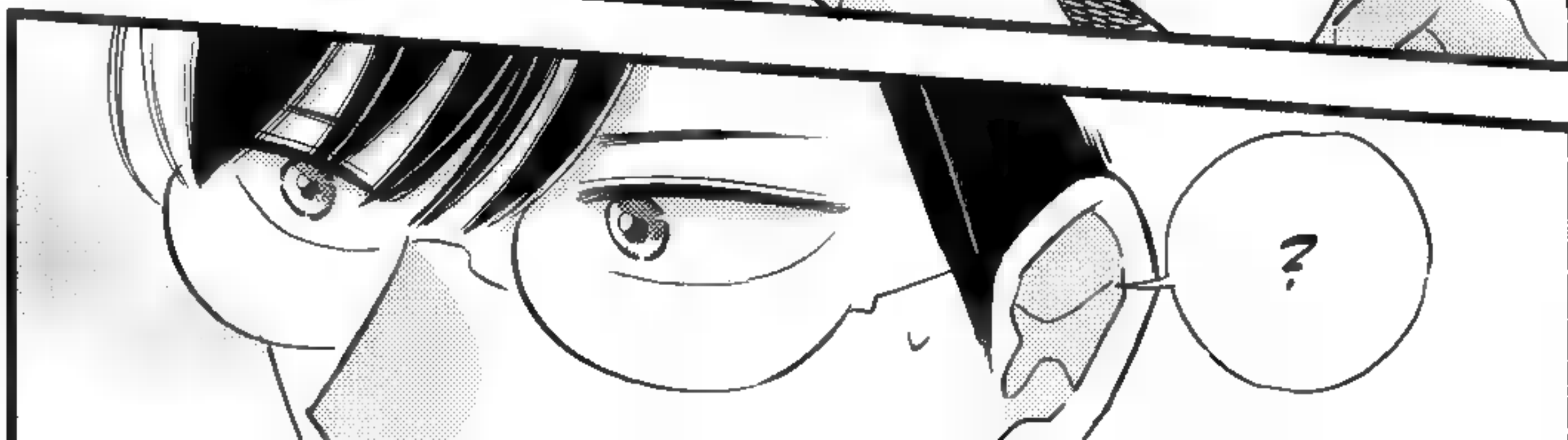


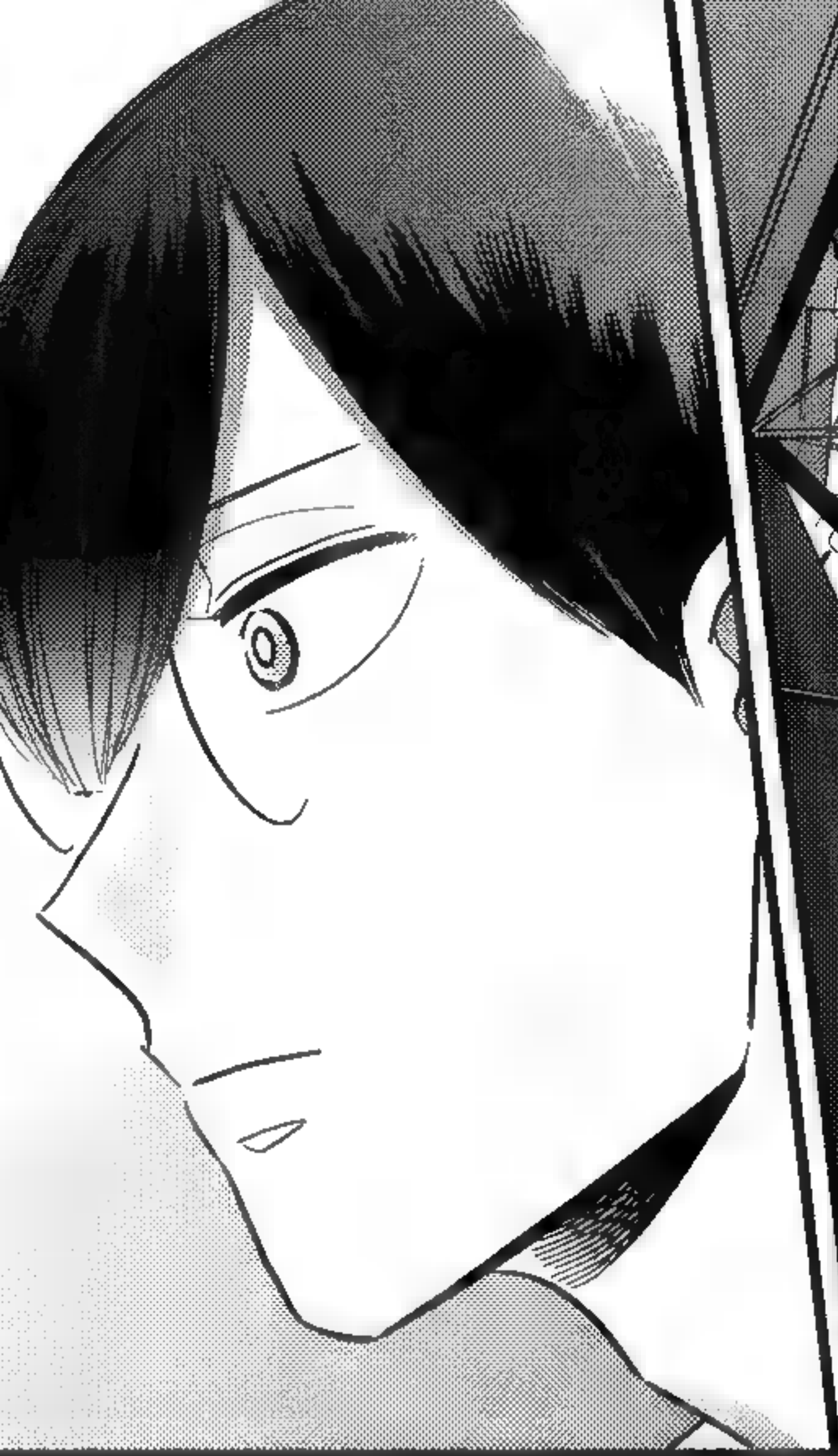






NOT LIKE YOU GAVE ME A CHOICE.





...THAT YOU'RE
SO DEPENDABLE
IN FRONT OF
TANAKA-SAN!





LIKE YOU
DON'T KNOW!



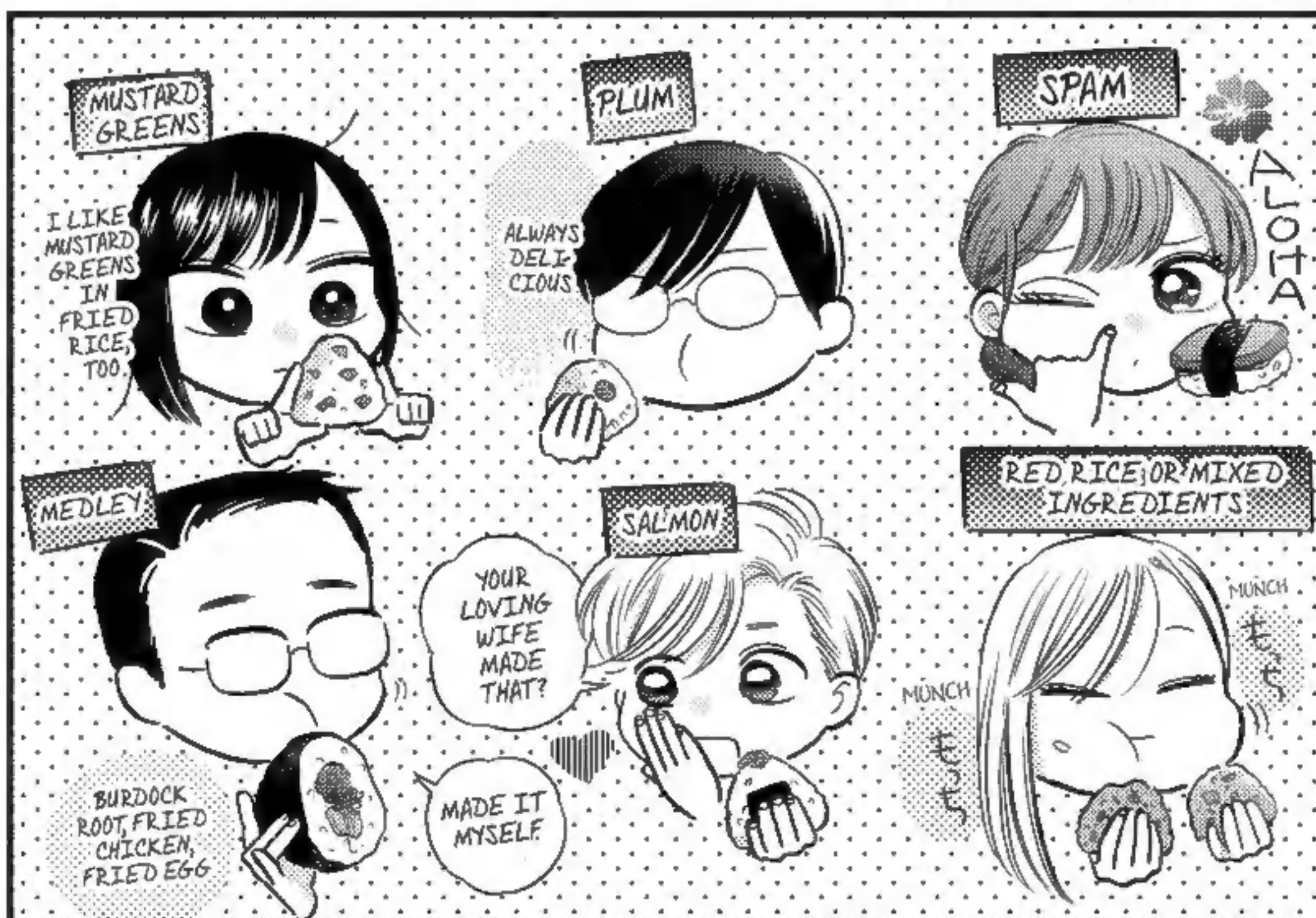
WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?



I'M TALKING
ABOUT LOVE!

END OF VOLUME 1

FAVORITE ONIGIRI



A Side Character's Love Story 1 Akane Tamura

A Side Character's Love Story Vol. 1

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